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THE PRINCIPLES  
OF  
ECCLESIASTICAL UNITY

*FOUR LECTURES*

DELIVERED IN  
ST. ASAPH CATHEDRAL

ON JUNE 16, 17, 18, AND 19

BY  
ARTHUR JAMES MASON, D.D.

LADY MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AT CAMBRIDGE  
AND CANON OF CANTERBURY

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## PREFACE

THE following Lectures were hastily written, and for the most part away from books; but I have thought it best to print them (as I was desired to do) nearly as they were delivered, rather than to recast them, or to attempt to make them more elaborate or exhaustive.

Amongst other kind and attentive listeners in St. Asaph Cathedral was the Rev. H. Lucas, S.J., Professor at the neighbouring College of St. Beuno. I have to thank him for sending me in print the "Reply," which he announced his intention of making as soon as he had heard the first two Lectures. Mr. Lucas will, I am sure, not expect that I should follow his strictures upon every point. My own Lectures were not intended to form a

hand-book of the Roman controversy, but a short statement of the great principles on which Reunion may be most hopefully sought. I will only add, therefore, a very few words in defence of what I have stated in the Lectures themselves.

(1) I still maintain that the Pope's expression in the letter *ad Anglos*, that England at the Reformation was "bereft of the Faith" (*ab ea fide sanctissima abducta est, quam complura iam sæcula cum magno etiam libertatis emolumento læta coluerat*) was a most unfortunate expression. If it was written with a full historical understanding of what the Reformation did and did not do, then it reveals indeed a most distressing view of what the Faith is, according to modern Roman ideas. The Church of England retained at the Reformation the three great Creeds of Christendom in their integrity, and continued to use them in the very same sense in which they had

always been used before. The only "Faith" from which she can be said to have been *abducta*, or of which she "was bereft,"—that is to say, the only opinions which she had held before and voluntarily discarded,—were certain mediæval fictions, such as the explanation of the Eucharistic Presence known by the name of Transubstantiation, crude and baseless theories concerning the Eucharistic Sacrifice and concerning the Intermediate State. It is more charitable to suppose that Leo XIII. was unaware of our having retained the great doctrines of the Trinity, and the Incarnation, and the Atonement, and the like, than to suppose that he consciously made the Faith to consist in the fringe of mediæval superstitions which were repudiated at the Reformation.

(2) Mr. Lucas finds fault with me (on p. 9) because I only quoted modern writers in support of what he calls "provisional agreement

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on fundamentals." He had not my written words before him, and therefore it was most excusable that he should forget that I was only quoting Anglican authors to show what had been the temper of the Anglican Church since the Reformation. But the position which he assails is not so unknown to antiquity as he would have his hearers suppose. He could himself easily produce many patristic sayings, if he cared to do so, parallel to the proverbial saying of St. Austin, *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas*. My lecture was a mere expansion of those words. It is hardly to the advantage of the Roman Communion to quote words like those of St. Irenæus to which Mr. Lucas refers. St. Irenæus does indeed insist that all Catholic Christians are at one in their definition of the Faith, and he proceeds to state what that Faith is. That Faith, according to St. Irenæus, is precisely what I, in common

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with the whole English Church, affirm to be the fundamental and necessary Faith of Christendom. There is no place in St. Irenæus' Creed for the articles added by the later Church of Rome. The very purpose which St. Irenæus has in view precludes the addition of any such. It is his argument against the Gnostic heretics, that the contents of the Catholic Faith are too well known for people to foist new articles of their own upon the Christian creed, as the Gnostics tried to do—and as Rome does.

(3) The epigram of Hallam, which Mr. Lucas quotes (on p. 17), by no means expresses the true facts of the case. There would, indeed, be much difference in feeling between those who believed that they were really receiving Christ in the Holy Communion, and those who believed Him to be absent from that Sacrament. But I hardly know what professing Christians hold the latter belief. Certainly all Anglicans believe that Christ is really present, and that

they actually receive Him into themselves in the Holy Communion. Away from the altar, they might express themselves in terms not identical about the mode in which they suppose the blessed Gift to be related to the visible sacrament, which is "the means whereby they receive the same." So do Roman Catholics differ among themselves in the way in which they interpret their conceptions of Transubstantiation. But practically, at the time of receiving, devout people are not much given to analysing their conceptions. Probably the inner workings of the heart and mind are almost identical in a devout Calvinist and in a devout Romanist at the moment of communicating. That the Church of early days believed in Transubstantiation in the form in which it was inculcated by Innocent III. is an assertion which could only be made among people who knew nothing of the history of opinion. It is by no means implied in the

epitaph of Damasus upon Tarsicius, which Mr. Lucas, following Cardinal Wiseman's novel of "*Fabiola*," has pressed into the service. If I were to give the following quotations, without naming their source,—

"Drink This,  
Which before you drink is Blood,"—

"At Communion-times, He is in a great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break and administer Him,"—no doubt they would be claimed by a Romanist as proofs that the author believed in Transubstantiation. The author was George Herbert; and it is certain that he did not hold that theory. No more did Damasus—at least, this epitaph does not prove that he did. Mr. Lucas himself has shrunk from using the language of Damasus. Damasus says that Tarsicius died "rather than give up to mad dogs the heavenly members." Mr. Lucas translates. "that heavenly *body*." "Body" is a much gentler, and at the same

time a more exact expression than "members." The words of Damasus, if literally pressed, would involve the Capernaite doctrine of Pope Nicholas I., and of those Schoolmen whose opinions Bishop Gardiner rejected with such disdainful horror when they were alleged by Archbishop Cranmer.

(4) The language of Bishop Fessler, which Mr. Lucas quotes on p. 24, is a forcible example of the fallacy which underlies the modern Roman teaching. It is, in Bishop Fessler's language, to forsake the Catholic Church altogether, if we appeal from (perhaps) a majority of the representatives of the Church of to-day to the witness of Scripture and the Fathers—that is, to the whole Church as against a part or a phase. The promise of our Lord that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the Church by no means precludes the possibility that at some given moment a majority of the representatives of the Church may be on the



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wrong side, including the occupants of important Sees. It was so when (according to St. Jerome) the world groaned to find itself Arian—Liberius of Rome (for his case will not so easily be laid in forgetfulness as Mr. Lucas wishes) being among those who forsook the way of truth. It was in view of such a contingency that St. Vincent of Lerins wrote his well-known words, to the effect that present majorities were not to be credited with the authority of the Church when they were opposed to the teaching of the past. If Bishop Fessler's theory were right, then, after the adhesion of Liberius to the Sirmian formula in 357, it was a departure from the Catholic Church to question whether that formula was in accordance with the primitive teaching about the Godhead of Christ. Athanasius and Hilary ought at once to have surrendered their "private judgment," and submitted to the authority which imposed upon the Church the Anomœan doctrine. But

Athanasius and Hilary happily took a different view of the matter. They saw things as St. Vincent did afterwards. "What will a Catholic Christian do . . . if some modern infection taints not merely a small portion of the Church, but proceeds to infect the whole Church together? He will see to it that he cleaves to antiquity, which is well beyond the reach of the seductions of modern fraudulence." This is precisely what English Churchmen do with regard to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. St. Bernard is no bad witness in favour of supposing that doctrine to be a "seduction of modern fraudulence." It has no tradition whatever in its favour. Mr. Lucas is obliged to go as far afield as the writings of St. Ephrem the Syrian, to find what he thinks to be tokens of the antiquity of the belief in question. I do not know what passages of St. Ephrem he has in view. A popular controversial work on the Roman side, by Dr.

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Bruno, which has a preface by the late Cardinal Manning, quotes, as from St. Ephrem, sentences from prayers to the Virgin which better scholars in that communion, like Dr. Bickell, would tell him were spurious. Mr. Lucas may very likely read his Ephrem familiarly in the original, or perhaps his knowledge of "the beautiful and fervent invocations of Mary which fill so many pages" of St. Ephrem may be derived from Hurter's "*Compendium Theologiæ Dogmaticæ*." It is at least remarkable that so learned a man as the Jesuit Hurter should not be able to summon any of the better-known Fathers, Greek or Latin, as witnesses to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, but should be obliged to fall back on Syriac writers like St. Ephrem and St. Rabulas—who do not really bear him out,—and even on Armenian and Nestorian heretics, and upon Muhammad himself; while Petavius is reluctantly forced to confess that such

Doctors of the Church as St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and St. Cyril of Alexandria attributed to the Blessed Virgin not merely an inactive share in the original sin of our race, but also distinctly sinful feelings and actions. "The opinion of these three great men," he says, "concerning the Virgin Mother of God is preposterous, and no prudent person can approve of it." It is not my business to defend the opinion of St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and St. Cyril; but it is more in accordance with St. Vincent's notion of a Catholic to stick to their freedom on such points, than to side with the modern view which (since Petavius's time) has condemned their opinion as not only preposterous, but heretical.

I will not, however, go further into these controversies at present. Since my Lectures were delivered, the Pope's new Encyclical, beginning *Satis cognitum*, has been published. It has made no change in the situation. No one

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could have expected the Pope to say anything else, and no one has any reason to be disappointed at his reaffirming what he is officially bound to affirm. His new Encyclical brings no fresh reasons for supposing St. Peter to have held an unique authority among the Twelve, or to have transmitted that authority to a particular line of successors, or to have had the Bishops of Rome for his successors in any special sense whatever. These things are only asserted once more without any attempt at proof, and we are no nearer to being convinced of their truth than we were before. But the situation has not been made any the worse by the Encyclical. We knew the Pope's ideas about his own authority before, and it does no harm either to him or to us that he should repeat them to us again. Rather it conduces towards a better understanding to speak out plainly and often what we think to be true, so long as it is done in love. And no one can doubt the loving

spirit which expresses itself even in this apparently repellent Encyclical. May the same frankness and kindliness be maintained on either side! It cannot but have the effect of helping to create that moral atmosphere in which at last obstructions break up, and in which man comes to man, prepared to make the best of views which were not previously his. When we have learned on both sides to respect and to love, it will not be so hard at last to discover how to agree.

CANTERBURY,

*Eve of St. James, 1896.*

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## I.

### THE DUTY OF UNITY.

WHEN the Dean of St. Asaph invited me to lecture in this Cathedral, he was kind enough, at the same time, to suggest that I should take for my subject the Reunion of Christendom. I very gladly adopted the suggestion. Not only is the thought of reunion one which occupies much attention at the present moment, and, therefore, it may be hoped, opportune ; it is one which is naturally most attractive to a Christian heart, and very stimulating to the historical sense. The most illustrious layman of this diocese has lately implied that a long life of labour would be rewarded by the removal of a single obstacle which hinders the reconciliation of two separated Churches ;<sup>1</sup> and I would

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Gladstone's "Memorandum on Anglican Orders" in the *Times* of June 1 of this year.

earnestly pray that our gathering here this week may help to prepare a few hearts for such reconciliations, not on one side only, but on all.

I read not long ago in a newspaper that the reunion of Christendom was "always one of the booms of a silly season." And, indeed, it is only too possible in this, as well as other high and sacred causes, to make lamentable exhibitions of rashness and self-will, of rhetoric without reason, of ill-considered offers, of well-intentioned yet offensive proposals. These things bring the subject into contempt, and retard the cause. I trust that nothing which is said here this week may add in that way to the hindrances which obstruct us; there are already obstacles enough in the way without creating more. But, in spite of the difficulties created alike by the advocates of reunion and by its opponents, it cannot be doubted that the end of this century presents a more encouraging spectacle for those who would lessen the divisions of Christendom than anything which has been seen for centuries past. Even those who have gone furthest from the ancient conception of

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the Church have been touched with the desire for some kind of unity. We have become accustomed to the sight of conferences beneath the mountains of Switzerland, in which English Dissenters discuss with English Churchmen the subject of reunion among English Christians under many aspects. What has been attempted at Grindelwald under the form of a summer excursion, has been done in a more serious manner, in the form of prolonged consultations, promoted by the Home Reunion Society, between members of the English Church and members of a single Dissenting body at a time, in Langham Street. One such body, in its official capacity, has even approached the Bishops on the subject, though the result has not yet proved satisfactory. Scotch Presbyterianism seems to be striking forwards upon lines which must ultimately lead to a closer approximation with ourselves. As travelling becomes easier, and men of different nations learn to speak and read each others' languages more than they did, barriers become weaker, if they are not wholly broken down. Courtesies are more freely exchanged between

scholars, and even between high ecclesiastics, in different quarters. Historical study is perhaps more widely diffused, and proceeds, on the whole, upon methods more likely to be fruitful, than was the case a hundred years back. Thus, for instance, an entirely new intercourse has been opened up between Eastern and Western Christendom. The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians has not only already done much to protect from extermination, and to reinstate in a right position, that ancient group of heroic, even if formally heretical, Christians; the wise way in which it has gone to work has evoked admiration and sympathy in the Orthodox Churches of the East. The friendliest greetings now pass between Canterbury and those Orthodox Churches. English priests celebrate the Eucharist upon Greek altars. The congratulations sent by our Primate a few years ago to the Russian Church, when keeping its great anniversary at Kiew, were received with the utmost satisfaction, and even gratitude; and it is impossible to doubt that the

mission of the Bishop of Peterborough to represent the Church of England at the coronation of the Tsar marks the beginning of a new era in the mutual relations of these Churches.

And the most noteworthy feature in the whole landscape of our foreign Church politics at the present moment is, no doubt, the indication which we have received of a willingness on the part of Rome itself to take up a different attitude towards us. Mr. Gladstone has made us consider once more how significant this action of Rome towards us is.

I confess that I thought the Pope's letter to the English people a year ago a much over-rated document, and I think so still. In the first place, it would have been more effective, more simple, more Christianlike, if it had taken the form of a direct address to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, or to the Anglican episcopate in general. If rumour says truly, such was the generous impulse of the heart of Leo XIII. himself; but it was overruled by the diplomacy of that Curia which has so often intervened to hinder the more natural

action of the personal occupants of the great see. The address was shot out to English people at large, without so much as a recognition that there existed among us any special claimant to represent the ancient Church of England. It was probably not at all the Pope's wish to offer a direct affront to the Church of England; and the affront might well be forgiven, even supposing it had been intended: but, unquestionably, if it had been designed at Rome to mortify our pride, and to make us feel that we were regarded as only one among three hundred equally to be loved and pitied sects, no surer plan could have been chosen. There were, no doubt, great obstacles in the way of adopting the more direct and human course; but the courage which Mr. Gladstone discerns in the Pope's present action with regard to our Orders would have been more conspicuous in that letter if, after all these years, the Pope had written with his own hand to the Archbishop of Canterbury, man to man.

Secondly, it seemed to show a strangely

inadequate conception of the difficulties in the way of reunion that the Pope, in a letter designed to draw English Protestants into reunion with Rome, should have concluded with a promise of Indulgences to those who should use a prayer offered, not to God Himself, nor to the Lord Jesus Christ, but to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is true that the part of the document which contained this promise was not addressed to Protestant England, but to the Pope's own adherents in this country ; and it is generally understood that the Pope's personal wish was to make this part of the letter a separate thing, and not to mix it up with the general appeal *ad Anglos*. Perhaps it was just as well that the opposite counsel prevailed. Otherwise it might have seemed as if we were being approached under false pretences, and as if hopes were held out to us of finding at Rome a Christianity more like our own than actually exists. Honesty is the best policy ; no good comes of concealment of differences : and we may be glad that it was made plain that the union to which we were

invited was a union with men to whom at present it comes more naturally, in great affairs of Church policy, to turn for aid to the Mother of our Lord than to our Lord in person. The fact thus naïvely, or thus candidly, displayed shows us at once how great a gulf has to be bridged over, and is so far discouraging. The *Times'* leader upon the Pope's letter—said to have been the composition of a Roman Catholic who disliked the step which the Pope was taking, but dramatically assuming the position of the kindly English man of the world—pointed to this circumstance with a sort of satisfaction as disposing of the reunion scheme for the present. And certainly to flaunt, if I may say so without offence, Indulgences and prayers to the saints before Protestant eyes was a strange way of going to work for any one who knew the history of the Reformation period.

It may, however, be doubted whether the Pope, and those who aided him in the composition of the letter, were really acquainted with the history of that critical time,—at any rate, so far as England is concerned. The letter



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spoke of England as having been wrenched from the communion of the Pope—communion which, as is well known, was never renounced by the English Church when the Pope's authority over it was repudiated ; and it proceeded to affirm that, after being thus wrenched from the communion of the Pope, England was "bereft of that holy Faith in which it had for centuries rejoiced and found liberty." It looks as though the Pope were labouring under some strange misconception with regard to the beliefs of Protestant Englishmen in general. Such language is not only strangely inapplicable to the English Church with her three Creeds—the only ones recognised by Rome herself at the time of the disruption ; it is, let me thankfully acknowledge, almost as inapplicable to the chief religious associations in England which have separated themselves from the National Church. The faith in which England of old rejoiced and found liberty is still, in its most important elements, the faith of the Congregationalist and of the Baptist, of the Methodist, and even of the Quaker. I will not now speak of the curious

view of history betrayed by the language in which Leo XIII. speaks of the prudent efforts made by his predecessors to heal the breach between us and them. 'Those efforts remain at present unknown to me, and I wish that Leo XIII. had been able to indicate them more exactly.

There is a defect, however, in the Pope's letter which is more serious than an ignorance of history—unless, indeed, it springs from such ignorance,—and more discouraging to those who desire reunion than any avowal of convictions and practices which we consider to be unscriptural and uncatholic. It is the moral and spiritual tone in which the appeal is written. When first the letter reached us, Englishmen received it with expressions of approval which appeared to me not only fulsome in themselves, but also at bottom as little flattering to the Pope as his statement that England was bereft of the faith was flattering to us. Men seemed astonished that the Pope should be acquainted with a few simple texts of Scripture about the promises made to prayer, and that he should

exhort us to pray in reliance upon them. They spoke of the evangelical character and profound piety of the letter, as if such things were hardly to be expected of a Roman Bishop. But there was one note of evangelical piety which was markedly wanting to make that letter in the highest sense worthy of its occasion and of its author. There was not a syllable in it which breathed of humility or of penitence. It was generous, ardent, sanguine, sincere ; but while it found fault, however gently, with us, it had no faults to lay upon the see from which it emanated, or upon those in communion with that see. I can quite understand that the moment had not come for offering to reconsider any doctrinal questions. The Pope could not be expected to say that any of his predecessors had failed of their duty to that faith of which he said that we were bereft. But no definition of infallibility, no obligation of honour, compels him to think that Rome never made a practical mistake. "The open confession of guilt on both sides," said the pious German Catholic theologian, Möhler, "will be followed by the

festival of reconciliation ;” but there was no sign in the letter of Leo XIII. of any inclination to deal with Englishmen on the basis of mutual confession. I do not say that England ought to stand aloof until Rome makes such a confession ; but I am sure that it would have made our own confessions much more heartfelt, and would have attracted us much more powerfully towards reunion, if we could have been met by such words as Möhler desired to hear rising on both sides from “the consciousness of a common guilt, ‘We all have erred ; the Church alone cannot err. We all have sinned ; the Church alone is spotless.’”<sup>1</sup>

It is, I think, a mistake for English Churchmen, in their desire to be conciliatory and not repel, to allow the Pope to suppose that the impression produced upon us by his letter is other than what it really is. If he is led to suppose that we consider his overture to us everything that could be desired, the way of

<sup>1</sup> Möhler, “Symbolism” (Eng. trans.), vol. ii. p. 32. Quoted by Oxenham in his preface to Döllinger’s “Lectures on Reunion,” p. xxiv.

reunion is made harder and not easier. I own that, to my mind, a less hopeful reopening of intercourse could hardly have been made than in that letter of Easter twelvemonth. But still, the great thing is that it was made. The long silence between Canterbury and Rome has not yet been actually broken, but the next thing to it has been done ; and Rome has the merit of having been the first to do it. For centuries, Rome and we have gone on absolutely ignoring one another's existence, and generation after generation has grown up to think this to be the natural, the only possible state of things. Controversialists on each side have denounced and argued ; but, so far as official action was concerned, there might never have been for us any such person as the Bishop of Rome, nor for him any Church of England. Anything is better than that. Between private persons who have been long estranged it is of little importance what the first word is, or how it comes, which shows that one of the parties would be glad to come to terms. The best of all ways is, no doubt, that direct way which our Blessed

Saviour recommended, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." But where there is not courage enough to do this, it is yet something to send a roundabout message. Even if the message is not pleasantly worded, it is a movement towards reconciliation. "I wish you would tell Smith that he was a fool to quarrel with me at the beginning, and is a fool to go on with it now," would be a rough and clumsy way of beginning a reconciliation—but who does not see that it is better than nothing? An actual insult may sometimes improve the situation. When two old friends have met for twenty years without speaking, it would be a step towards a better understanding if some morning the one man knocked the other man's hat off. If therefore the Pope's letter *ad Anglos* had been far more distant, far less evangelical, far worse informed with regard to our history and position, far more self-righteous than it was, that letter might well be received with thankful joy, as indicating at least a wish for a more Christian relation between us and him. An advance has been made, and it is for us, with gravity and

circumspection, but at the same time with meekness and charity, to see that it is not our fault if the advance comes to nothing.

Nor has the letter *ad Anglos* been the only advance which Pope Leo XIII. has made towards union with us. That letter was itself an outcome of the interest newly aroused among French divines by the question of Anglican Orders. Ignorant as Englishmen often are with regard to the religion of the Continent, our ignorance is as nothing compared with that which has prevailed generally on the Continent with regard to ours. Archbishop Parker relates that when he entertained the French ambassadors, one of whom was Bishop of Coutances, in his house at Bekesbourne, he found them totally ignorant that there was any difference between the Church of England and "the Genevians and the Scottish." "I perceive that they thought before their coming," he says, "we had neither *statas preces*, nor choice of days of abstinence, as Lent, etc., nor orders ecclesiastical, nor persons of our profession in any regard or estimation, or of any ability, amongst

us.”<sup>1</sup> Although the good Archbishop “did plainly beat that out of their heads,” and hoped that these ambassadors might “be a great stay in their country for the better supposing of us hereafter,” yet the ignorance, even of our nearest neighbours across the straits, concerning English ecclesiastical matters, was till recently, at any rate, as great as ever. The sight of an English Prayer-book is generally an astonishing revelation to a French clergyman whom you meet in the railway carriage. There are still, or have been till recently, Roman seminaries abroad, where that which we know by the name of the Nag’s Head Fable is taught to the students as the unquestioned fact. No hint is given that we have any other account of the matter to offer. The teachers do not themselves know that we have any other account.

Probably Leo XIII. himself—if I may draw an inference from such phenomena as I have been able to perceive—was as much in the dark on this subject as any other foreign ecclesiastic, until the pamphlet of “Fernand

<sup>1</sup> “Parker Correspondence,” p. 215.



Dalbus"<sup>1</sup> was brought before his notice. The language of his letter *ad Anglos* about the state of things in England is that of a man who has lately learned with surprise facts quite unknown to him before. It is, therefore, a very significant thing that he should have appointed a commission to examine into the validity of our Orders, and should have placed on that commission scholars so independent as that erudite critic who is this week receiving in my University an honorary Doctor's Degree—I mean the Abbé Duchesne. What may be the decision of that commission is, of course, of no consequence to the English Church within itself. We have never had the slightest misgiving about the validity of our Orders. We do not consider the See or Court of Rome to have any judicial authority in the matter. Opinion for opinion, the judgment of the Abbé Duchesne, or of the Abbé Gasparri, men of trained critical ability and of full and exact knowledge, is of greater importance than that

<sup>1</sup> Fernand Dalbus, "Les Ordinations Anglicanes" (Paris, 1894).

of a whole College of Cardinals who have not studied the subject, and with whom, therefore, expediency must necessarily go for more than truth. It is of greater importance even than the opinion of the benevolent successor of our Apostle Gregory. But in view of the practical politics of reunion, the action of Leo XIII. is most significant. Not only would it, from the Pope's point of view, be much simpler and easier to deal directly with us, if he felt that he had grounds for dealing with us as a real, though erring Church, with a valid, if uncanonically appointed, ministry. From our point of view, the very investigation of the question is an admission that the Roman Church may have been all these years misguided, and acting on defective information—as indeed she has done. Even if the majority of the commission should be so blind as to advise the Pope that our Orders are null and void, its appointment at the outset was of the nature of a confession. It contained in itself something of that element of a willingness to repent which I said was noticeably absent from the letter *ad Anglos*.

There, indeed, lies the courage of the Pope's proceeding. It is the first indication, so far as I am aware, that has been given to the world for centuries—of a disposition at Rome to reconsider things, to be ready to go back upon practical decisions, to seek fresh light upon matters which had long been considered settled, to hear evidence in favour of an old opponent's position. I do not think that in this aspect the importance of the inquiry with regard to Anglican Orders can easily be exaggerated. It opens the door to hopes which are almost endless.

I have dwelt somewhat at length upon this point, because I wished to make it clear that, great as are the difficulties of Christian reunion, it is not an absolutely absurd and frivolous thing to discuss the subject at all; but that there are at this moment encouragements for those who desire reunion, such as have not been offered for a long time past. Probably most of us would feel that union with Rome would involve greater difficulty than union with any other Christian body; and therefore, if some measure of hope has been

given us that union with Rome itself might, conceivably, in answer to the prayers of many, be once more established upon right and Catholic principles, then there is hope in every quarter.

But however great or small may be the degree of hopefulness with which we contemplate reunion in any particular direction, it is necessary to remind ourselves that the effort after reunion is an indispensable part of the duty of Christian men and Christian Churches. We cannot acquiesce in a divided Christendom without surrendering the Christian faith itself.

The Christian faith is wholly bound up with the conception of its own necessary oneness. Beyond all other monotheistic religions, it declares One God. Beyond all human philosophies, it declares the unity of man. And its peculiar message to the world is the revelation of the One Mediator between that One God and men at large, even the Man Christ Jesus. To the nations of the world, before Christ came, there were many gods, who, if they were not actually restricted in their operation to particular tribes of men and

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regions of country, were at least specially favourable to them, and scarcely accessible anywhere else. The Israelite religion itself was too often coloured by the same conception of its God as the special God of a nation and a country, who had no concern with other nations and countries, except, as being mightier than the gods of the heathen, that He should punish and humble them before His own people. The worship of the Lord, before Christ came, not only failed to promote unity between Israel and other tribes—such a failure was, so far as we can see, a necessary part of the lesson which it was designed to convey,—it failed even to secure religious unity within the nation itself. Opinions, of course, differ upon the question whether from the beginnings of the national history there was appointed a single focus of worship and a single family of priests to celebrate it, or whether diffusion was the original rule, and concentration the subsequent development. I am not prepared by special study to deliver a judgment of any value upon the point. But even if the latter theory is the true one

—if at first the multiplication of “high places” was permitted, and Samuel and Elijah were as authoritative priests as any sons of Aaron, and it was only in the course of time that such ministries came to be regarded as irregular—yet, even on that theory, the tendency may be regarded as a divinely implanted tendency, the legislative expression of that longing after unity which, amidst the unhappy disruptions of the Elect People, found inspired utterance by the voices of Prophets and of Psalmists. It is, perhaps, not easy to believe that the story of Korah’s rebellion, and of the mission of Phinehas to examine the altar of the tribes across the Jordan, are only priestly Haggadah—religious romances of a late age, intended to inculcate a principle unrecognised in the days to which the romance transfers it. But even if it be so, I know of no reason why we should doubt that this process by which the one altar and the one high priest were marked out, and all competition suppressed, was part of the great development by which God led the world to converge upon Christ.

It is a very considerable part of the prophetic teaching which looks forward to the restoration of a lost unity among men. Most frequently, no doubt, it is the reversal of the catastrophe under Rehoboam which occupies the thoughts of the Prophets. Before the downfall of the northern kingdom, Hosea foretells the dispersion of his people and its blessed result: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel;"<sup>1</sup> and Isaiah, amidst all the terrors caused by the invasion of Sennacherib, believed, as Hosea did, that both branches of the nation would be scattered, and both would be brought back in unity: "He shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."<sup>2</sup> Their forces, instead of being

<sup>1</sup> Hosea i. 11.<sup>2</sup> Isa. xi. 12 foll.

turned against each other, should combine in swift and victorious aggression upon the hereditary foes of both. When Israel was long since carried away, and Judah was approaching a like disaster, Jeremiah still persisted in the same belief: "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers."<sup>1</sup> The disaster came. The Ten Tribes were now almost obliterated, and Judah was in captivity; but Ezekiel caught up the same message of assurance: "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. . . . And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David."<sup>2</sup> "And I will make them one nation in the land; . . . and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall

<sup>1</sup> Jer. iii. 18.<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxxiv. 12, 23.



they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. . . . And they shall all have one shepherd. . . . And I will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.”<sup>1</sup> A portion of Judah returned from the Captivity, while another remained behind; and an alienation between the two portions sprang up and grew apace. It was when a sign of reapproach between the two portions of Judah came, that Zechariah saw his most majestic vision of the empire greater than all the empires of the world: “He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”<sup>2</sup> It may have been about the same time, that the sight of an united people, gathered for a while to some religious festival at Jerusalem, moved the heart of the Psalmist to utter one of the loveliest and most touching of the Psalms: “Behold,” he cried, “how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell even together;” and he likened the fraternal spirit which possessed them to every

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxvii. 22, 24, 26.<sup>2</sup> Zech. vi. 13.

cool and fragrant thing—to the anointing oil which sanctified the entire person and the very garb of the high priest who formed the central figure in the gathering,—to the moisture drawn up from the snowy mountains of the north to alight in refreshing dew upon the hills surrounding Zion. He felt that it was to such unity, concentrated round the chosen spot and the chosen man, that God had promised—nay, had “commanded”—the blessing, of life for evermore.<sup>1</sup>

The religious union even of Israel itself—unless it were in the days of the Exodus, or in the days of David and Solomon—was an ideal unfulfilled. Yet it was enough of a reality to suggest to the illuminated minds of the prophets an union greater than itself. The singling out of a peculiar people to receive God’s revelation of Himself had, for its first and necessary effect, to draw a sharp line of demarcation within mankind. The Hebrew race—after circumcision—the Jewish Church, lay on one side of that line, and the dark Gentile world on the other.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxxiii.

Usually, the mutual relations of these two sections of mankind were regarded as those of fundamental antagonism. They were the Church and the world, exclusive of each other, and deadly enemies. That the triumph would ultimately rest with the people and religion of the true God was felt to be certain. The form which that triumph would take was most frequently—though the language is mystical, not literal—regarded as one of revenge, of spoil, of domination. “They shall take them captive, whose captives they were ; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids.”<sup>1</sup> “Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers ; while ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord : men shall call you the Ministers of our God : ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.”<sup>2</sup> But sometimes the vision of the future was expressed in terms which are of more unqualified spirituality. Israel, Zion,

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xiv. 2.<sup>2</sup> Isa. lxi. 5, 6.

are still the nucleus and centre ; but mankind gathers round them on the footing of free fellow worshippers, not of subjugated foes. "In the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, . . . and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> "I will think upon Rahab and Babylon with them that know Me."<sup>2</sup> "I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord."<sup>3</sup> It is a new and wider and holier unity which is thus established. As God is one, so man shall be one in His service. Perhaps the thought finds its most perfect utterance in the words of the prophet Zephaniah, where he speaks indeed in the usual strain of the Divine revenge upon all the earth, but includes the Jew with the Gentile in that humbling process : "I will take away out of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of My holy mountain." "Then will

<sup>1</sup> Isa. ii. 2, 3 ; Mic. iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lxxxvii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. lxvi. 21.

I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." <sup>1</sup>

Not in Judah and Zion, as they anciently were, but in Christ is the vision to be accomplished, and mankind to be made one in Him. It was His own great desire. "Other sheep I have," he said, when the Jews had cast out one who professed belief in the Son of Man, "which are not of this fold ; them also"—as well as those of the fold which in its ignorance cast him out—"them also I must bring ; and they shall become," not merely one fold—that is implied—but, what is more, within the fold, "one flock, one Shepherd."<sup>2</sup>

How dear the principle of unity was to the heart of our Saviour is made abundantly clear, in passages so familiar to us all that they scarcely need to be repeated. Men who know that they are praying for the last time with those who are to carry on their work after they are gone, do not pray for things of little value in their eyes ; they emphasize the points for

<sup>1</sup> Zeph. iii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> St. John x. 16.

which they care most. Our Lord's last prayer with His disciples is in substance preserved to us. No one can read it without seeing what lay most upon our Blessed Saviour's mind. Again and again He comes back to the desire for unity among His own. "Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are." To break unity is to forsake that holy Name. Nor was it only for the disciples then present that He prayed, but for us. The unity which He desired was not to mark only the first stage of His Church's career. "Not for these only do I ask, but for those also who through their word believe in Me; that all may be one, even as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me." That unity, which was the supreme glory of the Godhead, had already been bestowed upon the Church; and Christ prayed that it might not be forfeited. "And I Myself have given to them the glory which Thou hast given to Me, that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and

Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them as Thou didst love Me.”<sup>1</sup>

It is no wonder if, with these words ringing in her remembrance, the Church from the beginning considered schism, as M. Renan says, to be the worst of crimes—though M. Renan thought that she only learned so to regard it at a later time, from the Imperial genius of Rome.<sup>2</sup> The Epistles which he recognised to be St. Paul’s would have been enough to teach him that it was no such late after-thought. “I beseech you,” cries that Apostle to the Romans, whom others had taught, not he, “to note the men who are making divisions and offences among you contrary to the doctrine which ye received, and get away from them ; for such men do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own belly.”<sup>3</sup> “Christ is dismembered,” he cries to the Corinthians, when he learns of the party feeling there ; “I hear that there be schisms among you ; and to

<sup>1</sup> St. John xvii. 11, 20 foll.    <sup>2</sup> ‘Hibbert Lectures,’ p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

some extent I believe it. It must be so, in order to make clear which of you are genuine.”<sup>1</sup> “The works of the flesh are manifest,” he tells the Galatians, “partisanship, divisions, factions ; of which I tell you beforehand, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”<sup>2</sup>

St. Paul had learned the true measure of the value of Christian unity. In an Epistle of whose genuineness Renan doubted, but accepted now by critics as suspicious as Professor Jülicher,<sup>3</sup> St. Paul saw that the death of Christ itself had been expended upon the reconciliation—not of man to God only, but of man to man ; establishing that unity of Jew and Gentile to which the prophets had looked forward. “Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who once were afar off were brought nigh in the blood of His Cross. For He is our peace, who made both things one, and destroyed the middle wall of partition, in order that He might make the two men into one new man in Himself, and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 13 ; xi. 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 19 foll.

<sup>3</sup> “Einleitung in das Neue Testament,” p. 84 foll.



might reconcile them both in one body to God through His Cross.”<sup>1</sup> It was the doctrine of St. John as well. Christ not only prayed for unity and worked for unity; He died for unity. Recording that fateful utterance of Caiaphas which was the sentence of death upon Jesus Christ, the Evangelist adds his comment: “Being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but in order that He might gather together into one the scattered children of God.”<sup>2</sup> If this was the very purpose of Christ’s redeeming death, a Christian cannot be deterred, by the inherent difficulties of the enterprise, by the scoffs of those who think the enterprise vain, by the sense of his own or others’ impotence to effect it, from seeking, by prayer, by counsel, by labour of every sort, to promote the unity for which Christ cared so much.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii. 13 foll.<sup>2</sup> St. John xi. 51 foll.

## II.

### THE INTERNAL PRINCIPLE OF UNITY.

IF it is plain that we are bound to strive after reunion with the brethren from whom we have been sundered, the first question which we have to ask is, what sort of unity it is that we are to seek, and on what principle it is to be established. The answer is, I think, not hard to find, although it may be hard to apply to practice. Considering the very nature of Christianity, and the purposes for which Christianity exists, no merely outward and formal unity will satisfy the requirements of the case; there must needs be an internal unity. To bind all hearts and consciences together in willing fellowship, the uniting principle must be the principle of a common faith. The Church is the bearer of a gospel to the world. She is charged with a Divine

revelation. There can be no unity between those who conceive of that Gospel in contrary ways, and whose accounts of the revelation are altogether at variance with each other. Even if, by some contrivance, a society so divided could be kept from organic disruption, it would still not be one. The first thing to be aimed at is an agreement in the convictions which we find within ourselves, and which we seek to produce in others. Are Christians at large agreed in these convictions?

The answer to this question is likely to be a cry of derision. We shall be pointed to the religious wars, the bloody and fiery persecutions by which Christians have sought to exterminate the beliefs of other Christians. They are the scandal of history; and the divisions out of which they spring are the great hindrance of foreign missions to-day. "Which set of Christians am I to believe?" it is often asked—sometimes in mockery, but often with genuine concern. "While the Baptists tell me one thing, and the Methodists another, and the English missionary presses one view upon me, and the

French missionary threatens me with destruction if I do not accept another, what am I to do? How can I judge? I can only wait until you have settled your differences among yourselves, and then think of embracing Christianity."

Now, although I think that the divergences between Christians may be exaggerated, I cannot honestly profess that the Christian ideal would be satisfied if we could take mechanically the points of belief and practice which are at present common to all bodies of Christians, and join together upon them as a basis, while either silencing discussion upon other points, or permitting diversity of opinion upon them. Such a union would, of course, in the present state of things, be impossible; but even if possible, it would not be the unity of which we are in search. Christian unity has no model and pattern before it less perfect than the unity of the Father and the Son. This means an absolute coincidence of thought and of will between person and person. Though each Person of the Trinity has His own incommunicable movement of thought and will, which is not identical with that

of the others, inasmuch as the position of the one differs from the position of the other, yet the truth is the same for all, in every detail, as well as in its broad entirety. There is not, and cannot be, the smallest discrepancy between the mind of the Father and of the Son, in anything. And this is the unity which Christ desired to see among His disciples—"that they may be one, even as We are." Nor was this ideal treated by the Apostles as a mere dream, which was never expected to be realised. Of course it is not meant that finite beings like ourselves can singly and individually possess that mutual coinherence and circumincession (to use the technical terms) with one another which the Persons of the Blessed Trinity enjoy. But it is clear that we are not to be contented with a unity in which each may go his own way, and think as he pleases, and teach what he thinks, without interference on the part of the rest. That is not what St. Paul urged upon the Corinthians. The Corinthian Church, when St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to it, was as yet, so far as we can judge, outwardly one.

Communion had not been interrupted between the parties that were formed. There is no sign that the Pauline and Petrine factions had ejected, or wished to eject one another from the Christian society. Though in a high state of rivalry, they do not appear to have considered each others' views as intolerable, or as utterly subversive of the Christian religion. They were only "puffed up for one as against another."<sup>1</sup> But even this degree of disunion was hateful to St. Paul. He could not be satisfied by the outward cohesion of schools which, though at one in some points, were at variance in others. "I beseech you, brethren," he writes, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all say the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."<sup>2</sup> That is not the language of compromise, or of latitudinarianism. It is the language of an absolute unity.

I would not wish to speak harshly of the latitudinarian position in itself. It is indeed

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 10.

the expression of a generous idea. Able men have no difficulty in setting it forth in terms which compel our admiration and our sympathy. It is a far nobler thing, and more akin to the Divine charity, than the narrowness of a sect, great or small, which lays down the law on every conceivable question, and condemns to perdition all who dissent from its conclusions. As a temporary thing, as a makeshift, even Undenominationalism has a high value. It is a better thing than truculent warfare, and fierce intolerance in things of no great moment. But to make an ideal of it, to wish to establish it for ever, to exalt it as the true conception of the Church, this is to give it a very unscriptural position. Imposing as it may look, Undenominationalism is but a simulation of unity, and a substitute for it. The promoters of it are at work upon a construction like that of which we read in the Book of Genesis—"Brick had they for stone, and slime had they for mortar." A building of the kind reaches no completion. Confusion of tongues breaks out before any top can be reached, and the failure

of Babel stands as a caution and a contrast over against the unity of the Church of God. It is not a bad thing, in our present circumstances, in many matters to agree to differ. But this can only be useful as a step towards the abolition of differences by-and-by. We have to learn to agree. There can be no acquiescence in any unity short of that which is set forth in our Ordinal,—“to bring all . . . unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left, . . . either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.”

Truth is truth; and all truth is sacred. Christians have no right to give it away, or to renounce the labour of investigating it. Christ has made to us the promise that the Holy Spirit shall guide us into all the truth. That blessed Instructor of the Church Himself “searches all things, even the depths of God.”<sup>1</sup> We are told this, not merely to record an impressive fact with regard to the Holy Spirit, but to show us what opportunities and

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 10.



possibilities are thus opened out for the Christian who receives His indwelling. Inaccuracy, when we have this most profound and most delicate of interpreters for our own, partakes of the nature of sin. It is impossible to be too exact—that is, too faithful. A little error, connived at, or encouraged, may soon develop into a pernicious heresy, which occasions the downfall of Churches and the ruin of souls. There is nothing more insisted upon in the Bible than the obligation of strict adherence to sound doctrine. Laxity in regard to it is the beginning of apostasy.

And yet we are obliged to recognise that the ecclesiastical reunion of Christendom cannot wait until all who are now divided are already “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Such a unity as St. Paul speaks of is, after all, not a starting-point, but a goal. It can only be reached as the result of a long-continued fellowship. The Apostle himself looks forward to it as a thing of the future, not of the present ; an object of earnest endeavour, not of complacent possession.

The varied gifts, he tells the Ephesians, which the ascended Christ has bestowed upon His Church are given with a view to perfecting the saints—*i.e.* the whole body of the faithful—for a ministerial work in which every member of the Church has his share, “until we all arrive at, and meet in, the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.”<sup>1</sup> Evidently there is a great deal to be done before that consummation is reached, even in a Church such as the Apostle had before his eyes. The unity of men who are themselves imperfect cannot, at any given moment in history, be perfect; and Churches or sects which are constituted upon the basis of an already complete agreement upon every point, are constituted at a terrible cost to themselves and to Christendom at large.

The Church of God in the world is, as our Lord called it, a school. “Take all the nations,” He said, “for scholars.”<sup>2</sup> It is not to be expected that all who are being taught will be acquainted from the beginning with the things which they came into the school to learn;

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

or that they will instantly apprehend the instruction when it is given them, or even that they will at once heartily believe it all when they begin to understand it. Even Christian men will sometimes be stupid, and disinclined to exert themselves to learn, and suspicious of their teachers; yet unity is not fully reached till the taught, as well as their teachers, come to the agreement which St. Paul desires. And the teachers themselves are still but men. They too are but a more advanced class of learners. They have their infirmities and shortcomings. It cannot reasonably be demanded that even they should be in all points entirely at one. Many of the subjects which necessarily enter into religious discourse are in their own nature beyond human understanding, so that not even the greatest genius can speak with unhesitating assurance about them. There are other, many other, subjects which are not intrinsically beyond our capacity to grasp, but in which our data are insufficient for positive statement. More light may perhaps enable us to attain certainty with regard to them, but for the present the mind

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must be held to a certain extent in suspense. From the evidence before us we may incline more or less decidedly to an opinion, and may feel it important even to urge that opinion with zeal; but still we can see that the evidence is not so conclusive but that another view of the matter might be taken by an honest man. In some of these questions the very learning, and intellectual ability, and moral fairness, and spiritual force of the teachers in the Church will stand in the way of their agreement. Is the unity of Christendom to be held over until all Christian teachers have been brought to share the same opinion upon these questions? Is it right for those who have embraced one opinion to form themselves into a separate organization, and hold aloof from those who have embraced the other? Must they fight it out from behind the entrenchments of hostile lagers, until one or the other side succumbs? It is plain that if this is to be considered right, reunion can never take place. Ecclesiastical unity is compatible with variety, and even with contrariety, of views upon many points, even

in religion—although it must look forward to passing beyond that contrariety into the full harmony of truth.

A devout and simple layman of the Church was illustrating the other day the two opposite methods of seeking unity among Christians. He struck out with his hands like a man who strikes out to swim, flinging back the waters to right and left. "They," he said, "do that ; but we do this," and he opened his arms, and drew them to him across his breast, as if he would have taken in the world. Certainly the latter, the comprehensive method, as it is the more attractive, seems also the wiser way of going to work, if mankind is ever to be brought together in one. Instead of demanding assent to every conclusion arrived at in an interminable *summa theologiæ*—even if the conclusions be correct—is it not better to endeavour to discriminate between truth and truth, and to base Church unity only upon the acceptance of those truths which are of primary importance to her mission in the world, and to resist, as a temptation, the

tendency to exaggerate the value of others? Such a discrimination is not impossible. All truths are equally true; but not all truths are equally needful to be known and grasped. As I have already said, we are not equally certain that all the things which we think to be true are true; but even if we were, some of them are things of which it would be no very perceptible loss to be ignorant, while others are the very things that make life worth having. That Isaiah, we will say, wrote a particular chapter that passes under his name, is either true or it is not true. We are not as certain that he did, as we are that Christ rose from the dead; but even if we were, it would not be of the same consequence to us. To suppose, however erroneously, that it was written by somebody else, need not greatly affect any man's conduct; but the least shadow of doubt about Christ's resurrection is enough to darken the whole heaven for us all.

The attempt thus to classify truths, and to show their proportional value, was one of the first beneficent movements of the great Reformation,

and I venture to say that it was one of the most fruitful of all. "I think," wrote Frith from the prison into which he had been cast for suggesting another view of the Eucharistic Presence instead of the doctrine which was then dominant in the West, "many men wonder how I can die in this article, seeing that it is no necessary article of our faith; for I grant that neither part is an article necessary to be believed under pain of damnation, but leave it as a thing indifferent, to think thereon as God shall instil in every man's mind, and that neither part condemn other for this matter, but receive each other in brotherly love, reserving each other's infirmity to God."<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether it was these noble words which laid hold upon the mind of one of Frith's judges, as the words of Stephen laid hold upon the mind of Saul; but a few years later, long before Cranmer came to embrace Frith's opinion on the Eucharist, the first series of Articles put forth by the English Church were

<sup>1</sup> Frith's "Works" (ed. Russel), iv. 450, quoted in Dixon's "Hist. of the Church of England," i. 168.

expressly divided into two parts: "The one part containeth such Articles as be commanded expressly by God, and be necessary to our salvation; and the other containeth such things as have been of a long continuance for a decent order and honest policy prudently instituted, . . . although they be not expressly commanded of God, nor necessary to our salvation."<sup>1</sup> "[You do] not discern sincerely," wrote Archbishop Cranmer to one of his flock about the same time, "things commanded by God and by His Word, from things ordained by man and grounded upon mere devotion; which manner of discerning these two things, no doubt, these many years hath not been greatly regarded. The estimation of voluntary things hath put out of place, or at the least greatly obscured and hindered, the very articles of our faith, and such things as of necessity and upon pain of damnation we are bound both to believe and do."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Formularies of Faith in the Reign of Henry VIII.," p. 4, (Oxford, 1856).

<sup>2</sup> "Remains" (Parker Soc.), pp. 353, 354.



What Cranmer thus taught in the sixteenth century, his liberal-minded successor Laud pressed home in the seventeenth. It is the main contention in his dispute with the Jesuit Fisher, that "not even all points determined by the Church—even determined in General Councils—are fundamental."<sup>1</sup> "Deductions," he says, "are not prime and native principles, nor are superstructures foundations." "The Church of England," he wrote, "never declared that every one of her articles are fundamental in the faith; for it is one thing to say, 'No one of them is superstitious or erroneous,' and quite another to say, 'Every one of them is fundamental, and that in every part of it, to all men's belief.'"<sup>2</sup> Laud's godson, Chillingworth, worked the same thought out into his famous book on the "Religion of Protestants." Laud's *protégé*, Jeremy Taylor, made it the substance of his splendid pleading for the "Liberty of Prophesying." Taylor indignantly refuses to have it thought that he encourages

<sup>1</sup> Conference with Fisher ("Works," vol. ii.), 32; cf. p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> "Works," ii. 60.

what he calls "indifferency." "No part of this discourse teaches or encourages variety of sects, and contradiction in opinions, but supposes them already in being; and therefore, since there are, and ever were, and ever will be, variety of opinions (because there is variety of human understandings, and uncertainty in things), no man should be too forward in determining all questions, nor so forward in prescribing to others, nor invade that liberty which God hath left to us entire. The intendment of my Discourse is that men should not make more necessities than God made, which indeed are not many. The fault I find, and seek to remedy, is that men are so dogmatical . . . and impatient of others' disagreeings in those things wherein is no sufficient means of . . . determination, but that men should not let opinions and problems be obtruded as axioms, nor of questions in the vast collection of the system divinity be adopted into the family of faith."<sup>1</sup>

This, if I understand aright, has ever since been the attitude of the Church of England.

<sup>1</sup> "Liberty of Prophesying," Epistle Dedicatory.

She does not teach, nor suggest, nor sanction the idea that contradictory beliefs, except on a very small number of points, are equally correct, and that her ministers are equally right in inculcating opposite views. But she refuses to bind all her members down to the opinions of Calvin or of Arminius, to those of Zwingli or of Luther, not—let me repeat—as setting her approval on them all alike, nor as equally contemptuous of them all, nor yet as timidly afraid of pronouncing a judgment where judgment could reasonably be pronounced—but for this one purpose, namely, to make the more of those few things on which her pronouncement is absolutely made; to show unmistakably that there are some truths which stand high above all others in their religious value, even above those which may legitimately be deduced from them.

In endeavouring to discriminate between those truths which are to be treated as fundamental, and others which are of less consequence, a first aid may be found in Christian antiquity. Nothing can be of the very inmost

essence of the Church's message which has not been so from the beginning. If the Apostles, in the fulness of their inspiration, did not know, or teach, or record that our Saviour Himself taught, any particular view of things, then such a view, even if it were a true one, cannot rightly be insisted upon as necessary to communion. Reunion upon the basis of beliefs unknown to the ancient Church would be a mischievous reunion: it would be a conspiracy to desert the primitive faith. Here lies the main point of our contention with the modern Church of Rome. We accuse Rome—for it is possible to accuse without being unbrotherly at heart—of having erected into necessary articles of faith opinions which, to say the least of it, were not so regarded by the Fathers, still less by the Apostles. Until such regulations on Rome's part are withdrawn, it is impossible for us to enter into communion with her again. I do not say that it is impossible for us to enter into communion with Rome until she repudiates and denies the articles in question. That would be to overstep our bounds, and to make, as it were,

new terms of communion of our own, though of a negative, not a positive kind. But we have a right to demand—nay, in the interests of the Catholic faith are bound to demand—that such articles shall not be imposed upon pain of excommunication or of damnation. Whatever is fundamentally necessary to the Christian faith must have been always so recognised. If a thing was not so recognised, then, even if it be true, no one has any business to demand of us that we should recognise it.

In exacting from all her presbyters before their ordination an engagement to teach nothing as required to everlasting salvation but what they are persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures, the English Church takes a stand which is entirely Catholic. The ancient doctors of the Church are on her side when she disowns beforehand the encroachments that may be attempted by the “dogmatical” spirit of which Jeremy Taylor complains. “True or false” is not here the question, but “taught or not taught by the Apostles.” Assume for the moment that the doctrine of

the Immaculate Conception of Mary is true ; yet even so, that unanimous silence of the Fathers, to which St. Bernard points,<sup>1</sup> is sufficient to prove that it is of no great importance. St. Bernard held that that silence proved the doctrine to be false, for that the Fathers could not have passed it over unnoticed if it had been true. We need not perhaps go so far as that ; it is sufficient to say that they could not have passed it over in silence—and of course far less have spoken what distinctly contravenes it—if it had been a fundamental article of faith, of which the denial must involve ejection from the society of Christians. Adherence to the primitive type has always—in theory—been acknowledged as a distinctive mark of the Catholic Church.

I am not at the present moment concerned to discuss the rival claims of Scripture and of tradition. For many practical purposes they may be treated as identical. Scripture is (besides all else that can be said of it) the earliest proof of the tradition. No one will

<sup>1</sup> Epist. clxxiv.

seriously maintain that the Roman doctrines to which we object have been delivered down by a consecutive tradition from the Apostles which does not happen, in these instances, to find mention in the written testimony of the New Testament. They are, on the most favourable view of them, developments and enucleations of ideas which, from an earlier or later period, have been floating in the Church ; but they were not expressly committed to the Church by those first plenary authorities who imparted to the Society the teaching which they had received from Christ and had thought out by the aid of the Holy Ghost. If that is the case with them, then, even if they were logical deductions from Apostolic statements, it cannot be a *sine quâ non* of reunion that we should assent to them. We are bound to believe what Christ and His Apostles teach us. We must endeavour to be intelligent in following out their teaching to its issues. But we must be pardoned if we decline to accept as the conditions of unity a series of definitions which do not appear even in germ to be contained in the Apostolic writings, and

which have no place in early Christian history. In declining such terms of communion we are but following the ancient rule. "He did not perceive," cries Theophilus of Alexandria, where he denounces Origen for mingling the subtleties of the philosophers in his discussions—"he did not perceive that it is a devilish spirit which instigates men to follow the sophistical arguments of human speculation, and to consider anything as Divine which is not included in the authoritative Scriptures."<sup>1</sup>

Ecclesiastical unity can never be attained except upon the basis of a full and frank appeal to Holy Scripture, interpreted not only in the light of accurate scholarship, but also in the light of history. This is a basis upon which all Christian bodies at least can treat. All Christian bodies alike recognise the supreme authority of the canonical Scriptures. Roman and Genevan, Oriental and German, Anglican and Dissenter, though perhaps in practice some of them use the Bible more than others, yet all turn to the Bible as the main source of Christian

<sup>1</sup> Ep. Pasch., ii. p. 716 E (in De la Bigne's "*Bibliotheca Patrum*," vol. iv.).



teaching. They differ from each other in the value which they assign to the current exposition found at any given moment in the Church—some of them, as a matter of fact, losing all freshness of interpretation in their excessive deference to the fashion of the day, masked under the title of the authority of the Church ; but still the ultimate arbiter is by all acknowledged to be the Holy Scripture, which the Church is to interpret. It ought not to be utterly impossible to hope for union, if all Christian parties can be really loyal, and can credit one another with at least the desire to be loyal, to the authority which all profess to consider as primary. The Bible has a meaning ; and that meaning is ascertainable, if not always obvious. If on any points its meaning is hopelessly lost, or so obscure that honest and spiritually minded men, desirous of being in union with the Catholic Church, cannot agree about its meaning, we may be fairly sure that such a difference of interpretation is compatible with Church unity, and that the true Gospel of Christ will not be greatly hindered in consequence.

For no reasonable man can well doubt what the most important part of Christian teaching is. It is that which concerns the sacred Person of our Redeemer Himself. The function of Scripture as a whole is to set Him forth. "To Him give all the prophets witness." The Scriptures "are they which testify of" Him. Those portions of the Bible which are most directly concerned with Him have always been the most honoured in the Church. The four Gospels have been felt to be more essential to her existence than any other of the holy books. They are to her, in the language which Irenæus seems to have learned from a yet earlier author, what the four elements are in nature—part, we might almost say the whole substance, of her very world, without which the universe which she inhabits could not be.<sup>1</sup> No other book of Scripture bears the same dignity. Christ is the centre and cynosure of revelation. In proportion to their bearing upon His person, and character, and work, the various parts of the

<sup>1</sup> Iren., iii. 11. See "*Hermas and the Four Gospels*," by the present Master of St. John's.

Bible are more important or less. Christ is in them all ; and it is His presence in them which gives them their worth. Where the witness to Him is fullest, that part of Scripture is the most precious ; where the witness is more remote, there, interesting and profitable as it all is, we could more easily have been content to do without it.

The very first object of the Church's existence, as of the Bible with which God has entrusted her, is to bear witness to Christ. Her fundamental duty is to keep alive the remembrance of Him, and to make every age and every race to know who He is, and what He has done. To propagate faith in Christ is her paramount obligation. I admit that this task is a much larger and more intricate one than appears upon the surface. To know what Christ is involves a knowledge of His relation to the Father from whom He came, and of His relation to mankind to whom He was sent. It involves some notions concerning the sin from which He came down to deliver us, and concerning the method by which His

blessed work becomes available for us. According as the Church teaches clearly and truly upon such topics as these, Christ will be felt as a living power to men, or not. There is a majestic unity of the truth which does not suffer us to teach falsely on any topic without blurring the conception of the whole. It could not be otherwise, if Christ is, as He claims to be, the Truth, embracing and co-ordinating within His own living person the sum of things which are, and as they are. Yet false doctrine about Christ Himself is more baleful to the Church than false doctrine in the outlying regions of thought. Other things range themselves naturally in their places around the central fact, when men have been brought to understand that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, made man for our sakes. From that belief, light radiates forth of itself; and those who have firmly grasped it are already in a position to assimilate further truths, and to detect and repel false doctrine. The great heresies of history have been those which gave a wrong conception of the Person of Christ—

the Arianism which refused to honour the Son as the Father is honoured, the Docetism which refused to acknowledge that He came, and is coming, in the flesh.

Beside these false doctrines, all others seem to be insignificant. Pelagianism is, for instance, no doubt, a deadly error; but the worst thing in it is that it obscures our relation to the Saviour's person. Clear views of grace, such as Augustine drew out for us, are of immense practical value, helping the Christian to live in peace and in victory. But clear views of grace are unattainable for those who do not know who and what Christ is; while those who have truly apprehended who and what Christ is may know by experience the life of grace without having heard any exposition of the way in which grace works. It is the same with all other false doctrines. The harm which they do is in exact proportion to the degree in which they obscure the person and character of Christ, and either diminish the reverence and gratitude which we owe to Him, or obstruct the freedom and confidence of men's access to Him.

About many subjects, therefore, we may be content to differ for a time, while earnestly labouring to purify our own vision and that of others, so that we and they may draw nearer to each other through a common pursuit of the truth in all its refinements. Differences of this kind have existed within the Church in all ages, not excepting the first. Even in the Apostolic College itself there was not complete identity of thought and expression. Disciples, of course, exaggerate the peculiarities of their masters ; and St. James and St. Paul are not to be held responsible for all that was said and done by men who professed, and perhaps in truth, to “come from” them. But St. Paul felt himself compelled to denounce passionately those who, sheltering themselves under the names of the “chiefest Apostles,” were for imposing upon Christian consciences a system of legal observances. St. James found it necessary to rebuke with scathing severity those who—I cannot but think—had espoused in an unguarded manner the characteristic language of St. Paul, so as to cut the sinews of moral

effort. Yet the fellowship between these holy men remained unbroken. Though a man who had heard St. Paul at Corinth lay it down that "we conclude that by faith a man is justified without the works of the law," and then at Jerusalem heard St. James reply, "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," might well be inclined to say, "These men are expounding two different religions," yet St. James and St. Paul knew too well the mind of Christ to part company on that account. When St. Paul, in private conference, laid before the Pillar Apostles at Jerusalem the gospel which he was preaching among the heathen, St. James listened to the exposition, and then, with St. Peter and St. John, "gave unto me and Barnabas," says St. Paul, "the right hands of communion."<sup>1</sup> Careful reflexion is able to perceive—doubtless the blessed Apostles themselves perceived—that their modes of expression were not mutually destructive, but supplementary to each other; but the discrepancy was not merely verbal and superficial. It meant

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 9.

that they approached things from very different points of view. While our religion to the one Apostle was mainly a message of relief to the stricken conscience, to the other it was characteristically a glorious aid to the formation of character. What was it that held them together, and, in spite of the tension caused by the extravagance of partisans on either side, prohibited the thought of organizing rival or parallel communities? It was doubtless the fervent and entire devotion which each saw in the other towards the person of their blessed Lord, "our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory,"<sup>1</sup> "our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours,"<sup>2</sup> who had commanded—or, rather, done much more than command—that His own which were in the world should be one.

This is, indeed, the great bond of union. No mere coincidence of opinion or of practice in other directions can be compared in uniting power with devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ. Even now, amidst all our outward schisms, and

<sup>1</sup> St. James ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 2.



all our inward alienations from each other, it makes our hearts burn within us to speak together of Christ. At such moments—of course I mean where the love of Christ is seen to be genuine and single-hearted—we feel impatient of those miserable barriers which have erected themselves between us to defeat or to delay His purposes. We are conscious of being really one, and feel that it is a shame that that unity should not be allowed to have its open and glad expression. What right have divergences of opinion or practice—by which either party intends only the promotion of the cause of Christ—to interrupt ecclesiastical unity between those who love each other for the love that both bear to Him? In the ancient days the love of Christ was confessed to be the internal principle of Christian unity. “Grace be with all them who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity :”<sup>1</sup> so St. Paul ends the great Epistle which displays the glories of the one holy Church. And, on the other hand, his curse alights—for there are bounds to the Apostolic

<sup>1</sup> Eph. vi. 24.

tolerance, though not to the Apostolic charity—upon those who have cut themselves off from that true unity by coldness towards our Lord : “ If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.”<sup>1</sup> Divines have denoted various signs by which it may be known whether a Church is a standing or a falling Church. Our Lord Himself, through His chosen divine St. John, gives us such a sign : amidst the unwearied activity, the moral earnestness, the careful orthodoxy of the Church of Ephesus, all which He condescends to praise, “ I have somewhat against thee,” He proceeds, “ because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, whence thou art fallen, and repent.”<sup>2</sup> It is adoring love of Christ which is the true fundamental article of the Christian creed. It may co-exist with many mistakes, many superstitions, many blindnesses ; and Christians may well be patient with these, while seeking to increase that central love which, in its natural and healthy action, will at last dispel them. “ If the persons be Christians in their

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. ii. 4, 5.

lives, and Christians in their profession"—I would heartily adopt the glowing words of Jeremy Taylor—"if they acknowledge the Eternal Son of God for their Master and Lord, and live in all relations as becomes persons making such professions, why then should I hate such persons whom God loves and who love God, who are partakers of Christ and Christ hath a title to them, who dwell in Christ and Christ in them, because their understandings have not been brought up like mine . . . have not the same opinions that I have, and do not determine their school questions to the sense of my sect or interest?"<sup>1</sup> God grant that we may so prize and exalt Christ above all, extol and magnify His person so incomparably over all, that the common devotion to Him may annul and bear down the divisions which keep us asunder, and make us again to be outwardly one as He left His first disciples one, until we reach that yet richer and Diviner unity which was to be the reward and consummation of abiding in the fellowship which He established.

<sup>1</sup> Preface to the "Liberty of Propheying."

### III.

## THE EXTERNAL PRINCIPLE OF UNITY.

TO many devout minds it has seemed that there was nothing further to be desired, if only such a sense of inward unity as I spoke of at the end of my last lecture can be attained and developed. They have thought that the multiplication of disconnected Christian societies was not only not an evil, but a positive advantage,—in the words of a great and charitable writer, “that a plurality of independent Christian communities in the same country is the ideal state of things, not merely a present necessity.”<sup>1</sup> It cannot be denied that, under the hands of an Almighty and good God, the results of well-meant separation are not unmixedly evil. But while the

<sup>1</sup> Hort's “Life and Letters,” ii. 428. The opinion is attributed to a loved and respected friend.

incidental good that comes of our present divisions may be thankfully recognised, they must not make us shut our eyes either to the direct commands of Christ in the Scriptures, or to the facts of Church history in the past, or to the large interests of Christianity in the future. No appearance of successful consequences could justify, as a permanence, the breaking up of the visible fellowship established and inculcated by our Lord and His Apostles.

And that view of life must be strangely distorted which professes to see more blessing than the opposite in a divided Christendom. "We might easily," cried Archbishop Cranmer, in his day, "convert even the Turks to the obedience of our gospel, if we were but agreed among ourselves."<sup>1</sup> Three hundred and fifty years have gone by, and events have shown us again with terrible force how far the Turks are from being converted. And who is most to blame for it? It is, as Cranmer said, the absence of unity among ourselves. Nor is it only that our efforts to convert the cruel

<sup>1</sup> "Letters" (ed. Jenkyns), p. 196.

world outside are paralysed by our divisions. Every day threatens us with the loss of nations which were once baptized. There are scores of townships in America and in Australia large enough to require and rich enough to maintain at least one resident minister and one church building, but where the professing Christians are so split up among themselves that no one community is sufficiently strong to do what is needed. What are the consequences? Parents are too much engaged, or too little concerned, to give their own children due instruction; and generations grow up ignorant of the very principles of Christianity: and when the offer of spiritual ministrations from outside is made, if only some local aid is forthcoming to meet it, the answer comes back, from christened lips, that they get on well enough without it, and see no reason why they should have a pastor at all. It would be a happy thing for us if America and Australia were the only countries where divisions threaten to unchristianize the people. England and Wales are suffering little less from the like calamity. What is all

the religious distress that centres around the present Education Bill? Does it not all spring out of the jealousies of rival sects? Where would the difficulty be, if we were only united as the Christians of the first age were? There are wide divergencies between the various schools or parties—if you like to call them so—within the English Church itself; but it is inconceivable that the strife of parties within the English Church should go to such a length as to endanger the withdrawal of religious teaching altogether from Church schools. That result can only follow from the system by which divergent views are stereotyped and fixed, and perpetuated, and made as eternal as men know how to make things, by the formation of separate bodies, with moneyed interests of their own, and associations which become at length hereditary, ancestral, historic, almost patriotic. Strife within one outward fellowship is sad and hateful; but it has not the persistence nor the power to do mischief on a large scale which comes from the establishment of full-grown schisms. For the moment, I trust that

the contention which lately ravaged this Principality on the subject of Church endowments and privileges has been lulled. I would that it might never break out again. But what was the cause of its ever beginning? Such an agitation, with all its hideous accompaniment of greed, and slander, and lying, and railing, and harsh judgments—on the one side, perhaps, as well as on the other,—could never have had its origin if—I do not say, all who took part in it had been possessed by the deep love of Christ which creates inward unity—but had found means to dwell together within the same outward fold. Such means must be found; if it were only in order that we may not fling away upon what are really unnecessary things, or could be provided otherwise, the precious heirlooms bequeathed by godly ancestors for the maintenance of the Christian religion. It is not wholly for ourselves that we Churchmen defend our position and our possession, though it would be strange if self-interest were never to affect our action: it is on behalf of Christianity at large; on behalf of the Church of the future;



on behalf of that greater unity of the days to come, when perhaps not all will be Anglicans after our particular pattern of to-day, but when we hope that all will be again one body in Christ, as well as possessed by the Spirit.

The two things must needs go together: "one body, one Spirit." St. Paul does not, in the original, merely state, as our English version makes him to do, the simultaneous existence of the two things. It is part of an exhortation to the Ephesian Christians. "Walk worthy," he says, "of the calling with which ye were called, . . . endeavouring zealously to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; one body, and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling."<sup>1</sup> Both things are possible to dissolve; both with equal diligence to be maintained. "Each," says a profound scholar who was no narrow-minded, tradition-bound ecclesiastic—"each implies the other. In the religious life of men the Bible knows nothing of a Spirit floating, as it were, detached and unclothed. The operation of the Spirit is in

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 1 foll.

the life and harmony of the parts and particles of the body in which, so to speak, it resides ; and conversely a society of men deserves the name of a body in the Scriptural sense in proportion as it becomes a perfect vehicle and instrument of the Spirit.”<sup>1</sup> If we allow, as surely we must, that the unity of the Spirit is more important than the unity of the body, we must nevertheless affirm that where the unity of the body is broken, or willingly left in a broken condition, then it is impossible for the unity of the Spirit to be really kept.

It may perhaps be necessary to premise, before going further, that if a Churchman speaks strongly against separations from the Church, it must not be supposed that he is necessarily blind to the virtues and graces conspicuous in very many of the members of the communities whose separation he deplors, or that he necessarily lays all the blame of the separation upon those who separated, and none upon those who stayed behind. There have been schisms in the history of the Church

<sup>1</sup> Hort's "Life and Letters," ii. 259.

which have at least been pardonable, which have indeed been justified. Where the local authorities of the Church exact the acceptance of terms which are positively sinful, before they will admit to communion—and this has sometimes been done—then a true Christian has no choice but to leave the visible communion, confident that he remains all the while in spiritual communion not only with Christ, but with Christ's Church also. Short of this, there may be occasions when, though it might be lawful to remain in communion with the local Church, the state of the local Church at the time may render it right to make the protest of holding aloof from her assemblies, and even of forming assemblies that are without her sanction. But these are extreme and rare cases. Nothing short of the most solemn sense of duty to Christ can excuse action of the kind. And when the cause of offence is taken away, then those who separated themselves ought gladly to seize the opportunity of return. To pass, as men do in our divided country, from one body of Christians to another without

serious thought, to gratify a personal liking or a personal grudge, to save the trouble of going a little extra distance to a place of worship, or for similar reasons, is not only frivolous and base ; it is treasonable. Ignorance may often be a sufficient plea to neutralise the personal guilt ; but in itself the thing is sin. And to perpetuate such a state of things is only less evil than to start it. It is vain to stand wrangling about the question who began the quarrel. Let us vie with one another who shall take the first steps to put an end to it.

Many of the divisions that have taken place among Christians have taken place over the forms of service to be used. This is especially the case with regard to Protestant Dissenters in England. And when we stretch forth to them longing hands inviting them to come back to union with us, they too often reply in a manner which shows that they think that we are inviting them to uniformity. I wish it could be understood once for all that Churchmen mean nothing of the kind. It is true that in past years English Churchmen have stood

very stiffly for uniformity. I do not know how far it was the Church's own ideal, or how far it was the ideal of the State, which enslaved the Church ; but however it was, uniformity became a principle which the law-abiding minds of great ecclesiastics could not endure to see broken. They did not always value uniformity for its own sake ; nor did they consider the prescribed order the only possible order for Christian assemblies ; but it was prescribed, and they felt it to be their duty to enforce it. "Does your lordship," exclaims the weary Archbishop Parker, in his last letter to Burleigh, "think that I care either for cap, tippet, surplice, or wafer-bread, or any such ? But for the laws so established I esteem them, . . . nor for any other respect."<sup>1</sup> Nor was it only the friends of the Prayer-book who wished for uniformity. Its opponents did so too. They scorned the idea of being comprehended along with men who used a service which they disliked ; when their turn came they proscribed the Prayer-book and imposed a uniformity of their own. Their

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondence," p. 478.

execution of the great Archbishop whose name was identified with the Prayer-book resulted, after the Restoration, in a more rigorous insistence upon uniformity than ever. A Churchman in the last century was considered to be bound down to very strict forms. John Wesley says that at the outset he was horrified at the thought of preaching in a field—though assuredly there was no rubric in the Prayer-book and no statute in the Statute-book which forbade it—and declares in his epigrammatic manner that he would have thought it a sin to save a soul anywhere else but in a church.<sup>1</sup>

There is, indeed, something very imposing in the conception of uniformity—to know that at the same hour in ten thousand churches the same words of praise and prayer are being uttered, with the same postures and the same ministerial actions and the same ministerial vesture. But it is by no means essential to the unity of the Church. There was little appearance of it in the primitive age. Though probably at a very early time some rudiments

<sup>1</sup> Tyerman, "Life of Wesley," vol. i. p. 233.

of a "canon" began to form, like that which is found in the "Didache of the Twelve," for the central portion of the Eucharistic service—although litanies of intercession, based (perhaps) upon the formularies of the Synagogue, like that of St. Clement, assumed a more or less invariable shape—yet as late at least as St. Justin Martyr, the higher clergy, if not others, "gave thanks" (as he says) "to the best of their ability."<sup>1</sup> There was variety in the order of service, and there was variety in ecclesiastical observances. One Church kept the yearly festival of the Lord's Resurrection on one day, and another on another; and when Rome and Asia conferred upon the subject, and could not agree upon a uniform practice, the Roman Bishop nevertheless relinquished his own place at the Lord's Table to St. Polycarp, the representative of the independent Churches of Asia. When a later Roman Bishop hurled an excommunication at a later Bishop of Asia for not conforming to the Roman usage in that respect, St. Irenæus, to

<sup>1</sup> Apol. i. 67.

whom Rome and Asia were alike dear, stepped forward to make peace upon the basis of local freedom.<sup>1</sup> Such continued for a long time to be the spirit of Rome itself, as exhibited in her most representative pontiffs. When Gregory the Great was given to understand that the rules which he had laid down for administering Confirmation had caused offence in the Churches of Sardinia, he yielded at once. "We only," he wrote, "acted in accordance with the ancient usage of our own Church ; but certainly, if there are persons who are aggrieved at the thing,"<sup>2</sup> let them follow what has been their own custom. The same liberal attitude towards differences of usage shows itself in his famous letter to St. Austin of Canterbury for the regulation of the affairs of the Church of England. "My brother, you know the custom of the Church at Rome, in which you were brought up ; but what I should like is that you should carefully select whatever may be likely to please Almighty God best, whether you find it in the Church of Rome, or in the

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., Hist. Eccl. v. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. iv. 26.



Church of Gaul, or in any other, and should import into the first establishment of the Church of the English, which is still new to the faith, those things which you have been able to gather from many Churches.”<sup>1</sup>

Although for a century or more it has been the policy of Rome to kill out local usages, and to reduce all her subject Churches to uniformity with Rome, Leo XIII. has begun to revert to the earlier policy of his see. At least so far as the East is concerned, he has forbidden the erection of any more schools conducted by religious orders from the West, and has strenuously encouraged the retention of the characteristic rites and customs of the country—even if (he loftily says) provincial or even General Councils have decreed otherwise.<sup>2</sup> And certainly, among ourselves, uniformity is not at the present moment held at a high value. I am very far from approving of the liberties taken nowadays with the Common Prayer-book. When men at the most

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 27.

<sup>2</sup> “*Litteræ Apostolicæ de Disciplina Orientalium*” (Nov. 30, 1894).

solemn moments of their lives have sworn upon the Gospels that they will use the form in the said book prescribed and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority, they ought, I think, to be very careful that the authority upon which they proceed is really lawful before they venture to act in a manner which wears even the appearance of not being in conformity with the book. But there are many quite legitimate variations in the way in which the Prayer-book services can be presented ; and there are few among us who would now wish to restrict those variations. And a great deal may quite legitimately be done, in churches and out of churches, to which the Act of Uniformity and the rubrics of the Prayer-book have no application at all. At no time has the English Church desired to impose one single form of service upon all men, as if it were the only right form. It never censured its own former Prayer-books, except for their difficulty and variety. It did not speak, like Luther, of the Canon of the Mass as "damnable." "We condemn no other

nations," so said the preface to the First Prayer-book of Edward VI., which is still prefixed to our present one, "nor prescribe anything but to our own people only." The Act of Parliament which removed Edward's First Prayer-book and substituted the Second, affirmed nevertheless that the first was drawn up under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and Cranmer, the chief author of the new one, said that no man could disapprove of that which it superseded, who had any godliness in him joined with knowledge.<sup>1</sup> There is, therefore, no reason in the nature of things why alternative forms and rituals should not be employed in an undivided Church. They are so at this day in the Scottish part of our communion, with certainly no very grave inconveniences arising. Whatever else we may invite men to do, when we propose to them ecclesiastical union with us, we are not inviting them to uniformity. The Dissenters who think so may dismiss the bugbear of uniformity from their dreams.

<sup>1</sup> "Answer to Gardiner" (ed. Jenkyns), p. 101.

There might, indeed, be the highest degree of uniformity without any unity at all. For anything that we know, the Donatists, and all the sects which broke off from the original Donatists, used precisely the same services and resembled in every point the Catholic Church of Africa ; yet so little unity was there, that if one of them came into possession of a church which had been used by us or by any rival faction of Donatists, they would not use it till they had scoured and scraped the altar. At this day, the Pope's Uniat Churches are almost entirely uniform with the ancient Churches which surround them, yet they are in schism from them. The Old Catholic Church of Holland uses the same missal as the Papal intruders who denounce it as a Jansenist sect. It would require great keenness of observation to detect any variations from uniformity between the Established Kirk of Scotland and the Free Kirk and the United Presbyterian Kirk ; yet there is not the more unity between them on that account. Here in England, the Prayer-book is very largely used in dissenting

chapels ; indeed, I have known cases where poor, ill-instructed Church-people have been seduced by officers of the so-called Reformed Church of England to attend their chapels on the ground that, because they used the Prayer-book, it was all the same thing. None the less, it was a deception and a falsehood. Two buildings may stand side by side, the one a facsimile of the other, to the minutest decoration ; the words repeated might be identical in both, sung to the same music by choirs vested alike ; the ministers might conceivably be on such amicable terms as to borrow one another's sermons and preach them without altering a syllable ; and yet the one be a Catholic Church and the other a schismatic conventicle.

There is no ecclesiastical unity where there is not intercommunion—that is to say, the right to receive freely at one another's hands the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. The interchange of pulpits, for which some modern teachers have so eagerly contended, would only be a substitute for unity, and serve to delude people into supposing that schisms

were healed which were, in fact, only hushed up. It is in the sharing together of the one Bread broken for us all, and in no other way, that "we the many are one Bread, one Body."<sup>1</sup> I am not at all denying that men can inwardly and spiritually eat of the same sacred Flesh of Christ, and so be inwardly and spiritually joined together, without receiving the Sacrament of it at the same table; but I am speaking now of that which constitutes the oneness of the *Body*, the *external* principle of unity. Intercommunion is the visible proof and the indispensable means of ecclesiastical union. It is the form of the organism. The object of the friends of reunion is—not to make all Christian Churches alike, whether within our country or without—but to re-establish one communion amidst whatever diversities, to do away with the erection of "altar against altar."

This resolves itself ultimately into a question of discipline. Who is to have authority to break the sacramental Bread, and to invite the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 17.

members of the undivided Society to receive it at his hands? Is any man at liberty to do it who feels the desire to do it, or who is asked to do it by a group of friends? or is there to be some public and authoritative commission to do it? The first of these alternatives would, in the extreme form in which I have put it, be the legitimatisation of anarchy; the second would be the system which has from the beginning prevailed in the Church.

To call one of these plans anarchy is, I grant, according to the proverb, to give a dog a bad name and hang him. Few Christian people have the hardihood openly to advocate the plan. It is, however, the method of the Society of Friends, except that with the rejection of a settled ministry has gone the rejection of all Sacraments, even of the Sacrament of the Lord's Table. It is the method pursued originally by more than one well-established community amongst us, possessed of a ministry which now proceeds upon an orderly line of its own. The Wesleyan Methodist Society, for instance, had no ministry until,

thirty or forty years after the death of its founder, it decided, under the presidency of Jabez Bunting, to commence a Wesleyan ministry, and men who had themselves received no ordination, nor anything which they themselves considered to be an ordination, undertook to ordain others. I do not speak with any contempt or bitterness of the Methodist ministry; I should be very sorry to do so. I only state the well-known historical fact, and my comment is that the proceeding of Jabez Bunting was in principle anarchical. If Jabez Bunting and his fellow-members of the Conference were right to ordain men to dispense the Word and Sacraments of Christ, any other group of Christian people might claim the same right. And it would be quite possible to argue that they have it. In some conceivable circumstances the argument would be a strong one. Sir Thomas More's Utopians, when they embraced Christianity, could not wait for the dim and remote chance of bringing a bishop from the shores of Europe, and proceeded to elect priests among themselves. It may have been impatient of the



crew of the *Bounty* to appoint one of their number to be their minister, when there was still a hope that their lonely island might be brought into communication with the great world and the great Church ; but the error was one which could hardly be called flagitious. Cranmer at one time (though it was a transient opinion, never, of course, acted upon, and soon discarded) thought that ministers might be duly created without laying on of hands or any ceremony of appointment.<sup>1</sup> I do not agree with Cranmer in thinking that appointment by the State would be sufficient to make a man a bishop or a presbyter—though what Cranmer meant by his suggestion was, not that the bishop's or the presbyter's office was a secular and unimportant thing, but rather that the Christian State was a very sacred and august institution of God, spiritually rich enough to make priests who would satisfy all requirements by its own fiat, if it chose. That passing opinion of Cranmer's was, in my judgment, untenable ; but if Cranmer had said that the Catholic *Church*,

<sup>1</sup> " Works " (ed. Jenkyns), ii. 101.

if it chose, might, without going *ultra vires*, recognise a man as presbyter by appointing without ordaining him, I do not know that I should care to attempt to disprove it. The power of binding and loosing committed by Christ to His Apostles is a very far-reaching power. But the case which we are considering was not such a case. In a country where there is an authoritative Church—a Church which has not apostatized from the faith, and which imposes no terms of communion with which it is sinful to comply—there, for any group of Christians who have received no commission for the purpose to take upon them the office of ordaining is, I will not say inexcusable or necessarily wicked, but essentially anarchical.

It would certainly be a vain thing to endeavour to reunite Christendom upon the basis of a recognised anarchy. Such a reunion would mean the extinction of the Church as such. I will admit without hesitation that no hierarchical pride, and no poetical sentiment, ought to hinder us from effecting such a suicide of the agelong corporation, if it were made clear that to do so

would promote the cause for which Christ founded it. But that Christendom would be the better for the death of the Church, and for the substitution of new societies springing up without any traceable order, is as yet very far from being clear. The principle of order is everywhere to be seen in God's kingdom of nature. Analogy leads us to expect it in His kingdom of grace. Express commendation of it is to be found repeatedly in the New Testament. Historically, the Church as an organization, the ministry as a most important part of that organization, owes its inception to Jesus Christ Himself. To it was given the gift of His Holy Spirit, and the signs of that Holy Spirit's indwelling in it have not disappeared. It would be faithless and disloyal to quit this Church. If unity is to be brought about, *that* is not the way to it. We must cry, like St. Austin to the Donatists, "We cannot come out to you; do you come in to us." Whatever counsel and humility and love unfeigned can devise to make the way of union easy and pleasant for you shall be done; but the method

cannot be that of consenting that men should assume the ministerial position independently of the authority to which from the beginning the regulation of these matters has been entrusted.

Almost all Christians will, in theory, acknowledge that no man can make himself a Christian minister. Some accredited agency is required in order to confer that dignity. The question remains, what that accredited agency is. Who is able to confer the ministerial character? To this question, three different answers are given.

The first is that which would ascribe to the Christian laity the power to make their own ministers by delegation. All fully baptized Christians are priests, and it may be imagined that they could, for the sake of practical convenience, restrict the exercise of their priesthood to chosen representatives of their own. Such a view has many attractions. It lends a vigorous presentment to a truth which is too often overlooked. Yet it receives no support in history, whether before the close of the Bible Canon, or since, until very modern times I presume that those whom I am addressing,

even if some of them are Dissenters, accept the Pastoral Epistles as genuine and authoritative. In the directions which they give for the ordination of elders, no hint is conveyed that elders can be made by the Christian communities themselves. Their appointment is seen to rest wholly with a Timothy or a Titus, who has received plenary authority for the purpose from the Apostle himself. In the presence of this fact, abundantly attested by other evidence besides that of the Pastoral Epistles, ecclesiastical unity can never be expected to take place on the terms of a ministerial commission conferred solely by delegation from beneath. Impressive as such a theory is, Scripture and tradition are alike too strong for it to be even listened to in a practical discussion of the terms of reunion. An Apostolic ministry can only be derived by transmission from those who, like Timothy and Titus, have themselves been solemnly entrusted with the function.

The same practical argument applies to the second answer to our question. Among the doctrinaire reconstructions of the sixteenth

century, in which the Bible was treated as if it were a newly discovered book, about the meaning of which nothing was historically known, some Christian bodies adopted the view that presbyters were the proper people to ordain presbyters, and that there was in fact no higher authority in the Christian Church. That view differs from the view of which we were last speaking in that it recognises in Scripture the principle of what is called Apostolical Succession, and many of its upholders have believed firmly that gifts of grace accompany the due observance of the rite of ordination. It is so far in accordance with the invariable practice and belief of Christendom at large. But it falls short when tried at the bar of history. There is no Presbyterianism in the New Testament. So long as the Apostles themselves lived, there was certainly a higher order of ministers in the Church, viz. the Apostles themselves, than that of the ordinary presbyter or bishop;—for in spite of recent doubts propounded, I still think that the two titles described originally the same office. It

is impossible, in view of subsequent history, to think that Timothy and Titus were not upon a separate footing from the presbyter-bishops whom they were bidden to appoint and to govern. St. James at Jerusalem was certainly the superior of the elders who were associated with him. No one but a daring sceptic in historical matters doubts that episcopacy, in our present sense of the term, was widely organized by St. John in Asia Minor. Such indications as have been alleged of primitive Churches where there were no authorities higher than the presbyter are precarious in the extreme, and I do not think a single instance can be adduced where ordination by the presbytery is mentioned or implied, except the passage in the Epistle to Timothy where it is demonstrable that this presbytery had acted in conjunction with St. Paul, bodily present.<sup>1</sup>

Advocates of the Presbyterian, and even of what I have called the anarchical view of ordination, still frequently appeal to the well-known essay of Bishop Lightfoot on the "Christian

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14; cf. 2 Tim. i. 6.

Ministry," as if he affirmed that Christendom was originally on their side. Even the Duke of Argyll did so in a letter to the *Times* last week. Lightfoot, in his extreme desire to be fair, did indeed give exaggerated prominence to such weak evidence as an opponent might allege. The statement of an Alexandrian author of mediæval times was perhaps the strongest evidence brought forward ; but Eutychius cannot seriously be quoted as an original authority concerning the antiquities of his Church, and his statement is in conflict with what we know from other sources. The variant reading *consecrant* in the Roman Hilary, to which Lightfoot refers, does not corroborate the statement of Eutychius ; for even if it, and not *consignant*, is the correct reading, it cannot mean that presbyters in Egypt ordained. *Consecrare* never means to ordain. In the passage in question it must mean the consecration of the baptismal chrism ; and even so, Hilary would be wrong. Egyptian presbyters might apply the chrism, but only bishops consecrated it. The silence of Ignatius on the subject of obeying their bishop,



when writing to the Romans, can be accounted for on many excellent grounds without wresting it into evidence that Rome had as yet no bishop properly so called. St. Ignatius, at any rate, assumes that the Roman Christians are familiar with episcopacy, name and thing; for he tells them that now, since he, the Syrian bishop, was being carried off to Rome, Syria was left with no bishop except the invisible Christ. Ignatius' visit was ten or fifteen years after the time of Clement, who was himself (in the language of Renan) in early relations with Peter and Paul.<sup>1</sup> Yet Lightfoot affirms without hesitation that Linus and Anencletus, Clement's two predecessors, were "bishops in the sense of being monarchical rulers of the Church at Rome."<sup>2</sup> And Clement's own witness on the subject of episcopacy has been materially reinforced since Bishop Lightfoot's pen fell from his hand. Dom Morin's discovery of a very ancient Latin version, hitherto unknown, of Clement's letter, has turned the scale decidedly

<sup>1</sup> "Hibbert Lectures," p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> "Clement of Rome," vol. i. p. 340.

in favour of the reading ἐπινομίν in a passage of great historical importance. "Jesus Christ," says this pupil of Apostles, "was from the Father, and the Apostles were from Jesus Christ. . . . They therefore, knowing from the Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife concerning the dignity of a bishop"—Clement uses the word in its older, more general sense—"first appointed, wherever they went, bishops and deacons of the believers that were to be ; and afterwards they gave an additional law, to the end that when they died, others might take their place."<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, Bishop Lightfoot's essay was never intended to bear the construction that was placed upon it. Its author was astonished at its being twisted into an argument in favour of something else than episcopacy ; and though he would never alter it, he made a catena of passages from his own works, which he had printed as a leaflet for general distribution—now reprinted in his "Dissertations

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Rom. § 42. 44. The Latin version is "postmodum legem dederunt."

on the Apostolic Age"—in which his convictions on the subject were set forth with indisputable clearness. Again and again he would speak of the Episcopate as "the backbone of historical Christianity." Generous and large-hearted as he was to all forms of Christian endeavour, no man was a more determined champion of that exalted order which for the last ten years of his life he graced.

Here, again, the undeviating usage of the Church throughout the world from the first century to the sixteenth, bearing out what appears to be the natural interpretation of the New Testament, is too strong for any modern theory, however ingenious it may be. Ecclesiastical reunion will never be brought about on the Presbyterian platform, or on that of Presbyterianism and Episcopacy treated as equally good one with the other. I know that highly revered English Churchmen have felt at liberty to receive communion from ministers who had only Presbyterian ordination. Many Churchmen might be far from sorry if the whole Church throughout the world could agree to

permit either method of discipline indifferently. But in practice it is impossible. If the English Church in her corporate capacity were to enter into full communion with the Presbyterian Churches, it would not only cause disruption within the English Church itself; it would bar the way to any reunion with the as yet unreformed Churches of Christendom. The cost would be too great. We must hope that the other counsel will in the end prevail. Few Presbyterians now, I suppose, are so wedded to Presbyterianism that they consider Episcopal Orders null and worthless. They prefer the Presbyterian way, of course; but they hardly consider the way which all Christendom followed for so many centuries utterly unlawful. May we not ask that ultimately, for the sake of unity, the Presbyterian Churches may be willing, under whatever honourable conditions can be thought of, to receive such supplementary additions to their system as would satisfy the Catholic conception of the sacred Orders?

It is not always evident, from the style in which Dr. Parker, the well-known Congrega-

tionalist minister of the City Temple, writes, whether he means us to consider him serious or not ; but he wrote a letter to the *Times* last autumn which, like some other things that he has written, touched me deeply, and increased the respect which I feel, not only for his ability and his strenuous labours, but also for his open-mindedness and his love of peace. I do not happen to have his words before me ; but the purport of his letter was that ministers of other denominations might be permitted to receive a laying-on-of-hands in the Church without thereby pronouncing their previous ministry unchristian and destitute of grace. He thought that a man in a position like his own might be glad to submit to such an ordination if it were understood that he was thereby qualifying for work within the Church, without passing condemnation on all that he had done elsewhere. Exception might, perhaps, be taken to some things in the letter ; I dare not judge by memory. But, generally speaking, that letter appeared to me to offer hopes almost as wide and as joyful as those offered

by the Pope's overtures *ad Anglos*. No English Churchman, that I am aware of, would wish to make Dr. Parker, or any other man who has laboured like Dr. Parker for the maintenance of faith in the Godhead of Christ and for the salvation of souls for whom Christ died, undergo what would be, not only a personal humiliation, but also a denial of the deepest experiences of life. For a man like him to receive ordination at the hands of a Catholic Bishop need not imply that what he had previously taught was all wrong, that souls converted by his preaching were still alienated from God, that what he had supposed to be the blessing of the Holy Ghost upon his work was the action of some other spirit. I should not, indeed, wish to encourage any man to approach the sacramental ceremonies of the Church as a mere form; and I do not believe that Dr. Parker intended anything of the kind. It was not as a mere form that the holy Robert Leighton came to be made deacon, priest, and bishop, though he was not personally dissatisfied with the presbyterian orders which he already had. The act

is a concession, if you will, for the sake of peace,—an acknowledgment on the part of the man who does it, that he does not possess what the Church understands by ordination,—a token that he desires for high and spiritual reasons to seek what the Church means, and a promise that he will use the authority with which the Church invests him in dutiful accordance with the Church's discipline. I do not see why more need be demanded of a man than this; and where this should be seriously offered by the leaders of a body long separated from the Church, the Church would incur a great responsibility if she rejected it.

It needs scarcely to be added that the unity of the body would not *ipso facto* be secured if every single person who undertook to administer the Sacrament had originally been empowered to do so by what all alike would accept as a competent authority. All the great schisms of antiquity, except perhaps the Montanist, were schisms organized by men in undoubted orders, celebrating sacraments which we should now call valid. In order to corporate unity, not only

must the laity be able to pass without anxiety from Church to Church, sure of finding everywhere, amidst all diversities of ritual, the same duly consecrated Bread. The presbyters themselves in each diocese must be united by canonical, *i.e.* constitutional obedience to the supreme authority of the diocese; and the supreme authority of each diocese must enjoy the mutual recognition of the rest. There we reach the old Cyprianic formula of the Church. Unity as an outward thing consists in the mutual recognition and fellowship of the bishops. There is no necessary step beyond that. Various modes of grouping among the bishops have obtained at various times and in various countries. They may consent to pay special deference to the occupants of particular sees, or bind themselves to act in concert with their brethren of a particular province. But essentially they are equal and independent. They represent, under the altered circumstances of their day, the College of the Apostles. If, among the Apostles, one was the leader, and others followed, there is no reason to suppose



that he had, or claimed, or dreamed that he might claim, any jurisdiction over them. The unity between the Apostles was the free unity between equal brethren, who owned "one Master, even Christ." Such was the pattern left by them to the Church of after-times,—absolute devotion to Jesus Christ binding them inwardly together in spite of natural divergences of temperament and education, and that inward unity expressing itself visibly in sacramental communion, in council and conference, in every manner of fraternal observance. We have a very fair representation of such an unity within the Church of England itself. We desire to see it extend until it embraces not only all English Christians, but "all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

#### IV.

### APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES.

IT is impossible without sin to remain contented with a state of division, when our Lord so impressively commends to us unity. That unity, the Church being what she is, must needs be an unity of faith, attainable only through the subordination of all questions to the great central article of devotion to the Son of God made Man. It must have for its visible expression, amidst an infinite variety of usages and forms, the free sacramental intercommunion between the locally recognised and duly commissioned chiefs.

The providence of God alone can show us in what quarter the healing work is actually to begin. It is unfaithful, as well as foolish, to batter at doors which are firmly closed, instead of looking to see which doors God is opening

for us. If unity is really as dear to Him as we have been led to think, He will not fail to indicate the way, if only we are on the watch for opportunities, and use them. Whether Home Reunion is the first thing in the future, or reunion with Rome, or with the East, or with the foreign Protestant Churches, only those will be able to tell, who "shall live, when God doeth this." Meanwhile, however, it may not be unprofitable to have quietly turned over in our minds how the principles which I have named might practically apply in some directions.

Rome—it is not unnatural if our eyes turn that way first. Rome is the hole of the pit whence, spiritually, we were digged. The English Church is the daughter of Rome. I know that we owe debts in other quarters, and I should be the last to underestimate them. Wales, particularly, carries her ecclesiastical history much further back than that thirteen hundredth anniversary which we are to keep next year at Canterbury. Nevertheless, broadly speaking, the Church of England, through Theodore, if you will, to supplement what was done through

Austin, is bound to Rome, to a degree beyond any other Church in Christendom, by filial piety.

And even apart from this peculiar link, Rome is the acknowledged centre of the Catholic organization. It was the capital of the Empire when Christ was born, and when Christianity became the leading religion of the world. In it the two chief Apostles, Peter and Paul—names always inseparable when Christians of early days spoke of the Western Apostolic See—taught, and died. To it gathered all the conflux of Christian opinion, right and wrong. Its wealth, its discipline, its charity, were a wonder to other Churches. The primacy of Rome, in the days when men began to regulate such matters, was unchallenged. Alexandria, Antioch, might be called upon to make way for Constantinople, which had risen suddenly into greatness; but Rome was always recognised as first. To say that the Bishop of Rome's primacy in Christendom is of Divine appointment is an assertion that cannot be maintained, if by it is meant that Christ when

He was on earth made such an appointment, or that the inspired Apostles did so afterwards ; but it is true in the larger sense, in which history reveals the Divine will. God made Rome to be what it was in ancient days to the world, and thereby formed of it a throne which took natural precedence of the thrones of all other Christian bishops. I suppose that no English theologian or historian or canonist has ever denied or challenged this primacy. To recover our proper relations with that great See must necessarily be the longing of every one who cares about such matters at all—especially when he thinks of its present venerable occupant, *bonus et pacificus pontifex*, as was said of his predecessor Xystus, in the third century,—“a good peacemaker prelate.”<sup>1</sup>

M. Raguey, in a correspondence with an English clergyman which was published last week, complains that, in speaking of reunion with Rome and the accommodations which would be requisite, we expect that Rome should do all the changing. He replies that Rome

<sup>1</sup> “Vita Cypriani,” 14.

will not change an iota, and that reunion can only take place when the English Church is prepared to accept unconditionally and unreservedly the entire Roman system of doctrine and of practice. Cardinal Vaughan in effect said the same in his speech at Preston. Happily, neither M. Ragey nor Cardinal Vaughan speaks with authority. They only guess, as other men may. If that kind of spirit is to be always exhibited, there will certainly never be a reunion. Archbishop Laud spoke the mind of England when, on receiving the secret offer of the Cardinal's purple, he replied that Rome must be altered in many respects before he could enter into communion with her.<sup>1</sup> Since Laud's time Rome *has* altered, but altered for the worse ; and there will consequently be more to change on her part than there was then, before it could be right to renew the broken connexion with her.

Obviously, the first and most prominent change required is connected with the Papal Infallibility. If it is to remain, as it has now

<sup>1</sup> See Hutton's "Life of Laud," p. 154.

been for twenty-six years, a condition of communion with Rome that we should accept that doctrine, the sooner we cease troubling ourselves over the matter the better. "I will not go down into the grave with a lie in my right hand." Those were the words of the greatest master of history nurtured in the Roman communion—at any rate within our recollection—when the Vatican dogma was pressed upon him. At the time of the last Lambeth Conference, when our relations with foreign Churches were under discussion, I went to Bishop Lightfoot, and besought him, in the name of others as well as my own, to see that Rome was not left altogether out of the account. He was willing enough to do what he could, but he said—and he was a man of large tolerance—that Rome was now bound over, by the Infallibility decree, to something worse than a heresy, as "containing within itself the germ and potency of all heresies." That is indeed the fact.

I know well that the decree in question is capable of many interpretations. There is a sense in which it expresses, I will not say a

truth, but even a truism. When the Pope speaks as the representative of the Church, he cannot but speak truly. I grant it. The question is, when does the Pope speak as the representative of the Church? A Roman Catholic of my acquaintance ventured to talk to Leo XIII. about this dogma, and the obstacle which it presented to reunion between England and him. The Pope was distressed, and said that the dogma must be explained. Probably he would be almost as much shocked as we are by the recent utterance of a French Bishop, who told his flock that "the Pope was the incarnation of the Holy Ghost."<sup>1</sup> "The truth," he said, pointing to his own breast, "is not in me, but in the Church." He needed, he said, to take the proper means to find out the truth before he could pronounce. It was a very true sentiment; but if it is true, then the practical value of the dogma is gone. It is often thought—wrongly in my opinion—but it is thought to be of the greatest importance for

<sup>1</sup> The Bishop of Bayonne, in a Pastoral Letter at Pentecost of this year. See the *Guardian* of June 17th.



perplexed souls that there should be some constituted authority in the Church who is able to settle all disputes in faith and morals, and say positively what is true and what is false. The Pope was to be such an authority. Men might know what to believe by following his beliefs. But the authority crumbles away directly it is approached. No one knows when the Pope's utterances are authoritative and when not. It is even questionable whether any Pope has ever yet spoken *ex cathedrâ*, or whether the power now assigned is not simply one which may, on some emergency hereafter, be called into activity. The truth is in the Church somewhere; and if on some occasion the Pope should speak as her true mouthpiece, no good member of the Church could withhold his assent; but there is no knowing whether on any given occasion the Pope is not speaking (however honestly) under a mistaken idea of truth.

Herein lies the great danger of the Vatican dogma. Its vagueness gives it a most formidable power of mischief. Although it attributes

infallibility to the Pope's utterances only when pronounced *ex cathedrâ*, its effect is to create the presumption that the Pope is always right. It may suit members of the Roman communion, when they do not particularly like the wording of some encyclical, to say that it is not *ex cathedrâ*—and indeed I should wish to see that door held as widely open as possible, in order to increase the facilities of retractation,—yet without question the Vatican decree enhances, and was intended to enhance, the weight of Papal decisions and commands on all occasions. It is well known that, while some theologians in the Roman Church minimize and restrict to the utmost the range of the supposed infallibility, others would extend it to the whole of the Pope's ordinary *magisterium*. This latter construction is certainly the popular one; and it has much to be said for it. The Pope's infallibility upon great occasions can only rest securely upon the assurance that he is pretty sure to be right in his habitual conceptions and ways. It would be too sudden a miracle, for a man usually entangled in erroneous beliefs and committed

by his usual teaching to unchristian practices, all at once, by virtue of his position, when called upon to speak *ex cathedrâ*, to pronounce in favour of the truth which he had not perceived before. That the Pope is a safe guide in daily life is the natural corollary to the doctrine of the Vatican Council.

To this, or anything like it, a free Catholic cannot agree. He cannot admit that there is any presumption in favour of the ordinary *magisterium* of the Bishop of Rome which does not equally exist in the case of other Bishops. He may be glad to imagine that no Bishop of Rome has as yet pronounced *ex cathedrâ* in favour of anything false—which would, of course, mean that, among other things, the additions of Pius IV. to the Nicene Creed, and the decree of Pius IX. on the Conception of Mary, were not made *ex cathedrâ*, and so are reformable: but if, on occasions approaching so near to decisions *ex cathedrâ*, the Roman See could promulgate errors so conspicuous as those, there will not only be no presumption that Popes are usually right—as, for instance, when they

encourage (not *ex cathedrâ*) such devotions as those of Lourdes,—the presumption will be the other way. It may be conceded that there is no contradiction between the letter of the Vatican decree, and the fact that Liberius in his misery joined against Athanasius and subscribed an Arian creed, that Zosimus espoused Pelagianism and inveighed furiously against St. Austin and Catholic Africa, that Honorius was for a long while after his death formally anathematized by his successors for being a Monothelete, that John XXII. formulated—what is indeed probably true, but was, and is, regarded as heresy by the Roman Church—the doctrine that the saints are not yet in their final glory, but are still awaiting the general resurrection of the last day. These and other like things were, we may say, only private weaknesses of certain unworthy Popes. The Popes in question did not act as representatives of the Church. This may be so. But such facts do not encourage the Catholic Christian to make it his practical rule to believe and to do as the Pope ordinarily believes and does. There was never

a moment in Church history when it was more important for a Catholic bishop to speak on the right side, than the moment when Liberius failed. Excuses may easily be made for him ; but it was a bad precedent for inculcating presumptions in favour of sticking to the Bishop of Rome.

In any reunion, therefore, between Rome and us, it will indeed be necessary—as Leo XIII. said—to explain the Infallibility decree. It is not easy for great personages or for great bodies to unsay what they have publicly said ; and we should be wrong to ask for abjurations, and carrying of faggots round the stake ; but before we could enter into ecclesiastical communion with Rome, we should have to be fully assured that the Infallibility dogma (setting aside for the moment the unhistorical grounds on which the Pope claims the authority of Peter) involves no necessary submission to ordinary judgments of Rome, and that with regard to things future, as well as things past, the Church at large is to judge whether on any given occasion the Bishop of Rome has or has not spoken as her

representative. If we did not require some such assurance, we should be unfaithful to true Catholicism ; and though our sinful submission might bring a measure of peace between Rome and us, the reunion of Christendom would be at least as far off as ever ; for our base example would not be followed by the Churches of the East, nor by the great Protestant bodies of the West.

I will not now dwell upon changes which Rome might expect to be made among ourselves. "There are with us, even with us," as Oded said to the dissident tribes of Israel, "sins against the Lord our God."<sup>1</sup> But it will be for Rome to formulate what she requires in us, and for us to consider her sisterly—her motherly—suggestions. I hope that we should be ready to do so meekly, and with every desire to give legitimate satisfaction. Nor will I dwell at length upon the existing differences of doctrine between Rome and us. I have already said that the only possible hope of reunion—with Rome or any other Christian communion—lies

<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. xxviii. 10.

in recognising the paramount importance of the great truths concerning the Person of Christ which are already held by us all in common. In other things, while we claim liberty, we must also allow it. Opinions which we hold to be unfounded, and even pernicious, need be no actual bar to communion. We have learned already, within our great tolerant Church, how to bear gently with differences that go pretty deep, so long as they are compatible with belief in Jesus Christ. If communion with Rome were restored, we should doubtless have to extend forbearance still further, while expecting it to be extended to us. I think Transubstantiation to be a modern and misleading figment ; but I see no reason why we should hesitate to receive along with men who hold it, when both they and we alike believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is giving His very self to us in the Sacrament of His institution. I think the Invocation of Saints "a fond thing vainly invented," and I could never enter into communion with Rome until she withdraws her anathema against those who say so ; but in view of the multitude

of true Christians who have invoked the saints, from very ancient days onwards, we could not, I think, rightly insist upon it as a condition of communion that Invocation of Saints should be altogether forbidden. I hold the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin to be what St. Bernard called it; but so long as we are not compelled to hold it, the doctrine is not so subversive of Christianity that we are bound to compel another to reject it before we admit him to our altars.

At present the terms of communion imposed by Rome are, in our belief, uncatholic and wicked; but we give the men who impose them credit for believing them fully justified by Catholic principles. There is no reason, except either pride or cowardice, that need hold either them or us back from friendly conference over the things which divide us. Both sides desire to know and to follow the absolute truth. The time for such conference may, perhaps, not yet have come, though I think that there are signs of its approach. But if the time is not come, we must pray that it may be hastened.



Either Rome is, to speak frankly, an irrecoverably heretical Church, or she is not. The rest of Christendom has no right to say that she is until other means have been tried for her recovery than any which have been tried during the last three hundred years or more. When the methods of sorrowing love and of spiritual candour have been patiently used, we or our descendants shall be in a better position to judge. The removal of the sinful terms of communion now imposed seems, I admit, so all but impossible, that nothing short of Divine Omnipotence could effect it. But have not great enough things been already done by God's grace within the lifetime of the Church to enable us to pray without despairing for this most desirable consummation? He who promised that the mountains should remove at the command of faith can bring even Rome back to the primitive belief.

Meanwhile, it is our bounden duty to succour to the best of our power those Catholics who find it impossible to receive at Roman altars. We have no wish to encourage unnecessary

schism; but where men are driven from the Church for no other reason than because they will not consent to what St. Vincent calls "the frauds of modern error," and appeal to us for aid, we cannot turn a deaf ear. English Churchmen are often inconsistent in this matter. They think and speak of men like the Old Catholics of Germany and Holland and Switzerland—still more of those in Italy and Spain—with bitterness and contempt, as if they were heretics and schismatics. This attitude is, I say, inconsistent. If it is the duty of an enlightened Catholic in Italy to remain in the communion of Rome on the present terms, then it is the duty of the English Church to accept those same terms, and, if she will not, as individuals we must forsake her, and make our submissions to Rome separately. If we should be wrong to do this, then the Italian Catholic, when once he sees the truth, is wrong also, if, for the sake of quietness, he abides in the Roman communion.

A terrible responsibility would be incurred by us, if we attempted to drive enlightened

Catholics back into the Roman communion, or else to take their places in the Protestant communities. Italy, Spain, France, it is often said, will never become merely Protestant. I had a letter a few weeks ago from a French Protestant minister who bears a very distinguished name, invoking sympathy for a pious priest who had found himself compelled in conscience to quit the Roman communion. My correspondent told me that the Evangelical missions in France, with which he is himself connected, although they have some success among the working poor, fail altogether to touch the middle and upper classes, which, nevertheless, are dissatisfied with Romanism. He thought that the priest about whom he wrote had in him the capacities for a work like that of M. Loyson, without the drawbacks which have made M. Loyson's work so ineffectual ; and that only Catholicism, without its modern accretions, was able to supply what France most wants. The priest in question has now published a manifesto, which ends with the words, " En attendant, faisons le schisme." It is a great pity that he should call

his work by so sad a name. Catholics cannot range themselves on the side of a schism. But it is indeed no schism, it is the preparation for reunion, when men refuse, as he has done, to remain in communion with a Church which imposes sinful conditions, and we should do wrong if we should "make a man an offender for a word," and should withhold sympathy and aid from true worshippers of Christ, in that trying position, because they do not in every point express themselves as we should wish.

When we turn to think of the Churches of the East, the prospect is less beset with difficulty in one way, because those Churches are not hampered with a doctrine of Infallibility, as Rome is. Theoretically, they are free to make any reforms which would be in accordance with the ancient tradition of the Church. In practice, all the Eastern Churches are rigidly tenacious of ancestral custom. Their religion is, unless I mistake, to a far greater extent than is the case with Rome, external, legal, ritualistic. I do not mean by this that it is unreal, and that it does not affect life. That would be

most untrue. But I suppose that what we in the West consider to be the spiritual side of religion is less cultivated than it is with us. The sermons, for instance, which form so great a part of Church life, both in England and in the Roman Catholic countries, are rare, and indeed almost unknown, in most parts of the East. The main obstacle to reunion between the Orthodox Eastern Church and us lies in the general difference of tone and temper, more than in anything else,—combined with the great ignorance about our position and history which has naturally prevailed among them. We have suffered through being identified, on the one hand, with the Roman Church, some of whose characteristic divergences from the East we inherit, and, on the other, with the Protestant sects—American in particular,—which, regarding the Eastern Church as hopelessly corrupt, carry on a remorseless war of proselytism against her. Ill-guided zeal of the same kind, proceeding even out of our own bosom, has in the past increased the misunderstanding.

But the misunderstanding is quickly passing away, and it seems as if it would not be impossible, before long, to discuss the terms of intercommunion. In their case, as in that of others, we should be compelled to tolerate many things among them which we should not wish to encourage among ourselves, into which I need not now enter. They, on their part, would have to be forbearing—not only with regard to our ill-disciplined ways, which we may hope will improve—but with regard to matters like our mode of Baptism, which were an ancient subject of contention. The great doctrinal point at issue between us is, of course, the Procession of the Holy Ghost. Our untheological English minds would perhaps be willing to throw away the *Filioque* out of the Creed without a struggle, because we do not at once feel the practical value of the doctrine it expresses. But we should be wrong to do so. The West had no right to introduce that clause into the Catholic Creed without the consent of the East ; and, for the sake of peace, I think we might agree, if need be, no longer

to recite it. But if we did so, it ought to be solely on historical, not on dogmatic grounds; and it should be done only after making it plain to the Orientals that what we mean by the formula is no more than what has been taught by their own theologians, down to John of Damascus.<sup>1</sup> The happiest thing would be to agree that we should continue to follow our Western usage, while they continued to follow theirs, acknowledging in some article which ought not to be very difficult to frame, that our doctrine and theirs does not differ,—that we have no notion of two sources or principles in the Godhead, and that they do not mean to dissever the Holy Spirit in His origin from the Eternal Son.

Our relations with the lesser Churches of the East must depend to a great extent, I suppose, upon our relations to the Orthodox Church. If we can promote reconciliation between *them*, it will be more profitable than to open communion with them ourselves. There is no reason why we might not hope for communion with

<sup>1</sup> See "Report of Bonn Conference, 1875," esp. pp. 15, 103.

them in course of time. The martyr Church of the Armenians, to which all Christian hearts have been drawn with such painful intensity of late, though more or less tainted with Monophysite error, anxiously disclaims, or professes to do so, any repudiation of the doctrine of Chalcedon. Its representatives explain their abstention from that Council by saying that it was assembled to deal with a heresy which never troubled them. As for the Assyrian Christians, their great ignorance has hitherto been an excuse for almost any wrong opinions. Their Nestorianism seems to exist only in name; and their ideas about Nestorius himself, whom they reverence as a Saint, are so grotesquely far from the facts, that the knowledge which they are now quietly gaining must before long prepare them for full orthodoxy. Our Egyptian connexion ought to bring with it enlightenment, also, for the Eutychian Copts.

But if we strive to re-establish right relations with those ancient Churches which represent most conspicuously the conservative and



traditional element in Christendom, it is impossible for us not to strive also for a closer approximation with those which are freer and more progressive. When we think of the Protestant communities of the Continent, we are apt to be repelled, not only by their defective constitution, but also by the independent attitude adopted by many of their teachers towards the canonical Scriptures and towards the articles of the Christian Creed. I should be extremely sorry to see such a union between us and them as would involve the English Church in all the views of Wellhausen or of Harnack. We owe much, however, to those hardy spirits who venture out from the shores of the known world to investigate the unknown. It would be a grave loss to the Church, if she were quick to cast out of her pale men whose researches had led them to be critical for a time towards the sources and the contents of her own teaching. It shocks us, as we read M. Renan's "*Souvenirs d'Enfance*," to see a promising scholar driven from the Church because he was made to feel

it necessary for a Christian to believe that the book Judith, for instance, contains exact history. It would be lamentable if we should make a like mistake. Judith, of course, was never put on the same footing with the canonical books, not even with such as Daniel and Esther, before the misguided Council of Trent; and it is a much graver thing to question the date, and authorship, and character of a canonical book than of a deutero-canonical. But not every one who propounds a new theory with regard even to the canonical books is a heretic at heart. If we cannot bear with cautious, reverent, deferential suggestions of new views upon such points, we force men into being irreverent, reckless, and defiant. It is not possible to imagine that as yet we know all that can be known with regard to the composition of the books of Scripture, or to the history of Christian beliefs; and knowledge almost always advances tentatively—as often as not by means of brilliant mistakes and the thoughtful criticism which they evoke. If Continental Protestantism were much more penetrated than it is by the spirit of “wild

surmise," the Church ought not to stand sullenly aloof from it ; but should rather hope by wise and sympathetic interest, and by thankful absorption of whatever truth these explorers may discover, to sober and steady their work.

But not all German, or Dutch, or Swiss, or French Protestants are daring innovators. More is heard in England of the heterodox minority than of the great mass, who, in what I have maintained to be the fundamental articles of the faith, are at least as well informed, and as earnestly orthodox as we. Reunion would be indeed a one-sided thing if it succeeded in joining us with Rome and with the East and there stopped. That was not the way in the days when Laud corresponded on the one hand with Cyril Lucar of Constantinople, and on the other with Grotius and Voss. It was not the way when Wake negotiated with Dupin and Girardin on the project of reunion with the Gallican Church, and at the same time was in treaty with Jablonski and the Prussians. The memories of Saravia, and Casaubon, and Du Moulin, and

Grabe, who took refuge amongst us from the narrower systems in which they had been reared, ought to incline us to come to the aid of the Catholic-minded in Protestant lands as well as in Romanist ones. Every day English Churchmen use the commentaries and treatises of men like Bengel, and Delitzsch, and Dorner, and Godet; and though we may not be able to accept every word that they write, yet his must be a very limited spirit who does not feel that it is absurd, as well as wrong, that they should not be or have been in open communion with us.

There is one group of foreign Protestant Churches, at any rate, with which it ought not to be hard to come into sufficient agreement. I mean the Churches of Scandinavia. In France and Germany there are complications which do not exist in the Scandinavian Churches. The population of those countries—at any rate of Denmark—is professedly Lutheran, almost to a man. They are more like English people in the make of their minds than any other people in the world.

Great numbers of them have a good acquaintance with our language and our literature. While large-minded and truth-loving in the highest degree, their teachers are orthodox and learned, as well as devout. A movement which combined much of what was best in our own Evangelical movement and Catholic revival—the Grundtvigian movement—has deeply affected the Church in Denmark, where its adherents, at first looked upon with suspicion by the Government, have now come into high places. The Swedish Church has a personal succession of bishops, though theologically it may be doubted whether the formula used in the consecration is sufficient for its purpose. In Denmark, a violent *coup d'état* in the sixteenth century abolished the ancient episcopate, and substituted a new one which was episcopal only in name ; but the idea of the office is familiar, and the name is dear to them. A few years ago, when a new bishop was to be sent to Iceland, he begged leave to apply for consecration to the English bishops ; but the Danish Government of that day refused its consent,—

the great theologian, Martensen, himself, I am sorry to say, joining to crush the desire. I learn with regret that even in the Grundtvigian party the wish for a true episcopate is not so strong now as it was a little time back. Nevertheless, with a people in whom the historical instinct is strong, and whose ministers pass under the teaching of such a professor of history as Fredrik Nielsen of Copenhagen, it could not be difficult to establish relations. Last year, by permission of the venerable Bishop of Aarhus, I celebrated the Holy Eucharist for an English congregation at the magnificent high altar of Aarhus Cathedral, in the ancient ecclesiastical vesture which is still retained there, and with their own beautiful sacred vessels. I long for the day when it may be possible for these exceptional courtesies to pass into the fulness of fraternal communion.

It is sad to look back upon the failure of a scheme of partial reunion with foreign Protestantism which was generous in character, if not altogether wise in its method. The Jerusalem Bishopric scheme of fifty years ago had for its

chief result the detachment from the Catholic body in this country of some souls which we could ill afford to lose. There were two elements in that scheme which gave offence, besides the manner in which it was executed. One was a just cause of offence; the other, in my opinion, not. To obtrude upon the jurisdiction of the Oriental Bishops without their consent being first asked was unjustifiable, although Archbishop Howley took pains to explain the step in an eminently conciliatory manner. But I fear that what chiefly gave offence to the Oxford people, in the flush of their new enthusiasm, was the coalition which the scheme was intended to promote between us and the German Lutherans. I will not say that the details of the scheme were all satisfactory; but large Catholic hearts ought to have risen gladly to the main purpose of it. The Confession of Augsburg is not so good a set of Articles as our XXXIX., which were largely adapted from it. But there is nothing in it so radically wrong that we should be compelled to keep aloof from a Church which holds

it, if that Church possessed the full Orders of the ministry ; and the great majority of the men who sign it are still less heretical (if that were needed) than the formulary which they sign. If the Lutherans of Germany and of Scandinavia can say with us the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, why should we not be thankful to bestow on them, and beg them to receive, the heritage of an episcopate such as we should consider valid—to which they are not in principle opposed ; that we and they might enter into full intercommunion, and stand visibly together against the encroachments of false systems and in the elucidation and propagation of the true ?

I will not weary you with repeating what I have already said with regard to the impossibility of reunion upon the footing of the Presbyterian discipline. The word brings us home to our own shores, and makes us think of our relations to the Established Kirk of Scotland. There was a time when that Kirk received a modified episcopacy, under pressure from a king who thought that bishops would



be easier political instruments to manage than Assemblies. It was a bad beginning, in spite of the virtues of a Patrick Forbes; but it may serve to indicate that there are more ways than one of adjusting the relation of bishops to their flocks.<sup>1</sup> The Scotch Presbyterianism was a protest against prelacy rather than against episcopacy; and the restoration of the latter need not involve the introduction of the former. These countries have seen bishops kept as subordinate members of great dominant abbeys; and there is no positive reason why a diocese should not be governed by a college of bishops conjointly, rather than by a single bishop. It is not so much a uniform "system of Church Government" (as people often say) for which friends of reunion are obliged to contend, but rather the presence, in every Church, of ministers belonging to that Order to which from the earliest times has been restricted the authority of laying-on-of-hands.

The Westminster Confession need hardly

<sup>1</sup> See Gardiner's "History of England," vol. i. p. 76, and vol. iii. p. 230.

prove a more obstinate barrier to reunion than that of Augsburg. If we have been right in distinguishing fundamental things from things of secondary importance in the Church, who could maintain that (except for the question of Orders) we could not lawfully communicate with such a Church as that of Milligan and Macleod Campbell, and many other devout, and learned, and orthodox theologians, whose works are the enrichment of our libraries and of our hearts? Many an anomaly may be put up with in a moment of transition, for the sake of unity, which would not be right as a permanent thing; and if only it could, by God's mercy, be arranged that in all future ordinations the act should be the common act of the accredited officers of the Presbyterian and the Episcopal communities, Prayer-books and Directories being alike sanctioned, it would not take long to make the fusion of the two Churches complete.

In England, in Wales, the main difficulty consists in persuading the various bodies of Dissenters that organic unity is itself a desirable

thing. They have, for the most part, lost the Church idea, and have only in part transferred it to the respective bodies themselves. When the sacred passion for unity comes back to them, and the questions affecting the personal position of their ministers are settled—such questions as were raised by the letter of Dr. Parker to which I referred yesterday—the main characteristic of each separate body would, I think, be found not wholly incompatible with membership in the Church. No one is compelled to have his infant child baptized. The Church has always, on the highest, and widest, and deepest, and most Scriptural, and most genuinely Christian grounds, allowed it, and advised it ; but she has not commanded it : and if the Baptist can be content to receive the Communion along with us, he would be free to prefer adult Baptism, provided that he does not urge re-baptism upon those who were already baptized. The Congregationalist contention would for the most part be met by a relaxation of uniformity, such as I spoke of yesterday. Our standards of belief and practice are still in

theory the chief standards of the Methodist sects. Our modern Church missions are a sufficient proof that we welcome that evangelistic work which is the distinctive object of Methodism. It was through no lack of sympathy on the part of the representatives of the Church of England that the Salvation Army itself did not become a Catholic agency instead of a new sect. It is not the special feature or doctrine of the sects, taken one by one, which forms the main obstacle to reunion, but their inability at present to see either the duty or the advantages of unity.

To create and to foster the desire for unity must now be our chief task ; or, rather, to wait continually upon Him who alone can create and foster it. Each Christian privately, each Christian minister in his public utterances, can contribute to that result—negatively, by resolute refusal to speak unfairly or uncharitably of opponents,—positively, by making as clear as he can the great principles on which we might really hope for unity, and the reasons for which we desire it. Each one can prepare for unity,

not by gadding about to hear what the teachers of other bodies say before he has really mastered the teaching of his own, but by first expending serious and concentrated thought and study upon the cardinal principles of the society to which he naturally belongs. Especially I would urge this upon those whom I have the especial right to address, the members of the Church of England. The cardinal principles of the Church of England are unmistakably such as lead to unity. Loyalty to the Bible; deference, in interpreting the Bible, to the teachers of the first days; unwillingness to go to extremes in dogmatic insistence, freedom in the expression of opinion, subordination of everything to the love of Christ,—these are stamped upon the brows and upon the heart of the Church of England: and for this reason the Holy Church of England is especially qualified to be the peacemaker of Christendom. Men have sometimes quitted her pale in their desire for unity, and have thought to find it in the imposing solidity of the Roman communion, or in the imposing spirituality of an Evangelical

unsectarianism. Theirs is a great mistake. Not in that impatient and self-indulgent fashion is the great cause promoted ; but by abiding in the fellowship of a Church which "loves the truth and peace," and seeking to increase within that fellowship the knowledge and the charity which must at last issue in the triumph at once of Catholic Order and of Evangelical simplicity.

THE END.







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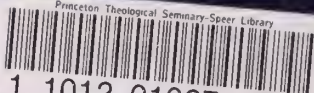








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